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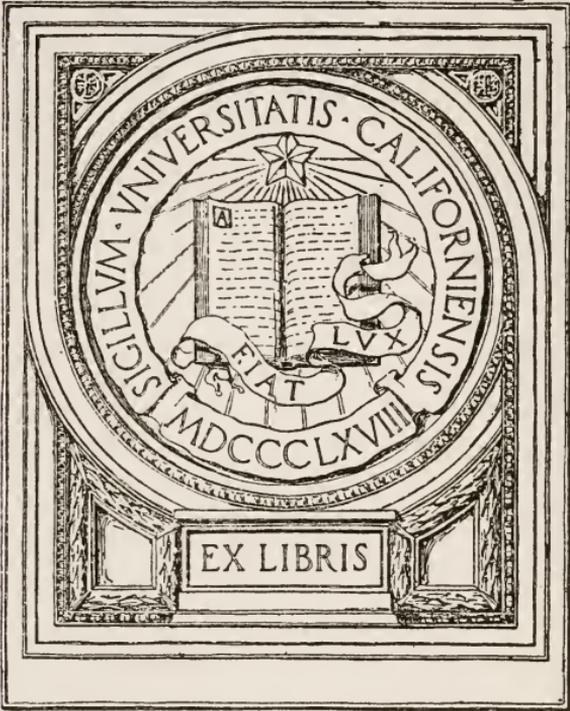


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YORKSHIRE DIALECT
PLAYS

JOHN METCALFE.

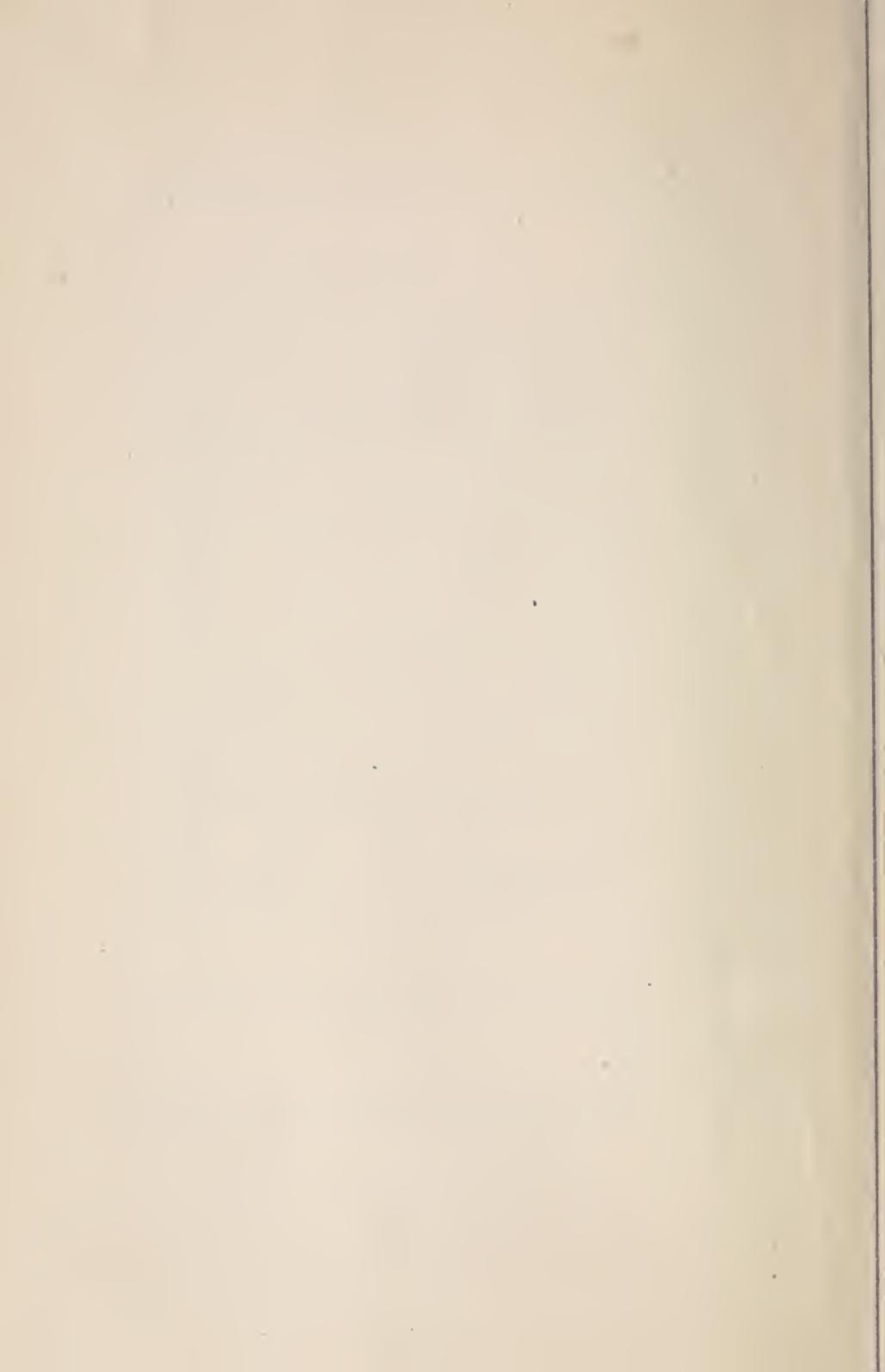
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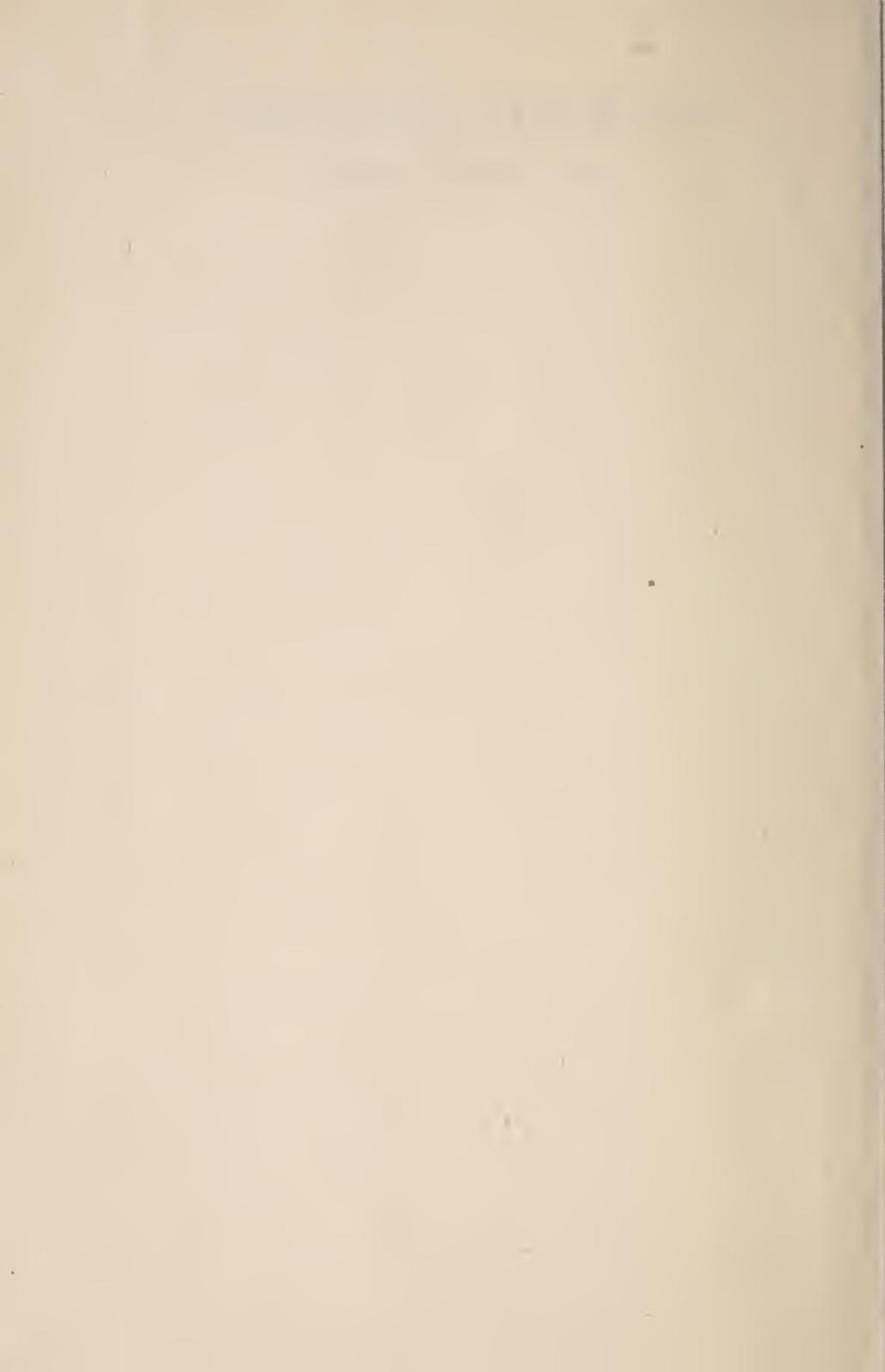
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BUNDERLEY BOGGARD
AND OTHER PLAYS.



Univ. of
California

BUNDERLEY BOGGARD

AND OTHER PLAYS,

BY

JOHN METCALFE

With an Introduction by

PROFESSOR F. W. MOORMAN, B.A., Ph.D.

HEATH CRANTON, LIMITED,
FLEET LANE, LONDON, E.C.4

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English Alumni

TO MY FRIEND
TOM TURNER.

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INTRODUCTION.

The appearance of a volume of plays, written throughout in the Yorkshire dialect, and interpreting the life and thought of the great working-class community in the West Riding, is a notable event in the history of our local dialect literature. Dialect poems, short stories, sketches and almanacs have for a long time made their way through the press and won a welcome from lovers of dialect literature, but I believe that this is the first occasion on which a volume of dialect plays has been published in Yorkshire.

There was a time when the county was rich in dialect plays. The Mystery plays of the York and Wakefield Corpus Christi Cycles, together with those of Beverley, which have, unfortunately, been lost, prove that in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries Yorkshiremen were keenly interested in drama and were taking a leading part in that great work of dramatic construction which was to culminate some two centuries later, in the masterpieces of Shakespeare and his associates. But the dramatic instinct of Yorkshiremen seems to have been crushed by the Reformation and the great social and cultural changes which followed in its train, so that local drama, apart from the survival of the venerable folk play of St. George, which our Christmas "peace eggers" have kept alive, has for centuries been in abeyance. Yet the county never lost its love for drama and the stage. Local historians have interesting stories to tell of the visits of strolling

players, and later of the erection of public theatres in places like York, Leeds and Sheffield, while one of the most interesting of the minor chapters of British stage history is that which records the establishment, about a century ago, of a little theatre in the outlying village of Grassington, and of the appearance there of actors and actresses who were later to become stars of the first magnitude in the theatrical firmament of the capital.

But in all this dramatic activity the part which Yorkshiremen have themselves taken has been receptive rather than creative. There has been no Yorkshire school of playwrights or actors. Our theatrical audiences have been content to accept whatever plays the touring companies have brought with them; they have paid the piper, but have shown no wish to call the tunes. But now at last there are faint signs that this submissiveness to extraneous taste, which accords but ill with the Yorkshireman's spirit of independence in other matters, is coming to an end. We are beginning to ask for a drama which stands in sympathetic relation to the life which we are living in the county of broad acres, a drama which reflects and throws light upon the problems which confront us. We are slowly growing conscious that the raw material of which drama is made is to be found in profusion in the farm-steads and manor-houses, the cottages, the mills, the shops, and the forges of Yorkshire. The humour and pathos that invest our local life are known to all of us, and the annals of the county are rich in tales of heroism, passion and endurance. Or if our heart is set on the so-called problem-play, where shall we find problems more urgent in their appeal for solution, or more potentially dramatic, than those which face us in the everyday life of Yorkshire men and women?

Mr. John Metcalfe is a Yorkshireman of ripe experience. He has a wide knowledge of the life of the West Riding artisan, and presents him to us with insight and sympathy. He knows, too, the conflict of social forces in the manufacturing towns and villages of busy Airedale. In his plays he carries us

back some seventy years to a time when civilization and education had as yet done little to wear away the sharp edges of character, and when men and women thought and spoke and acted with less constraint and less regard for public opinion than is now the case. He is also in full sympathy with the humour and pathos of the lives of the working-class community in town and country. He seems equally at home in the bar-parlour, the hand-loom weaver's cottage and the "Kal 'oil." He has an intimate acquaintance with the West Riding dialect, and throughout this volume of plays reproduces its idiom with great fidelity.

We heartily commend these plays to our local actors. They are admirably suited for amateur theatricals and should do much to foster a taste in dialect drama and in the interpretation through the playwright's craft, of the life that lies about us and is calling, with growing insistence, for artistic representation.

F. W. MOORMAN.

AUTHOR'S NOTE.

Although the aspirate is used in these Plays, it is never sounded in the dialect, neither is the final "g" in such words as "coming" and "going."

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BUNDERLEY BOGGARD

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

BILLY BUNDERLEY	Nephew of the Squire
SIR LUCAS BUNDERLEY	The Squire
TOM BRISKET	The Butcher's Son
JOE EGBERT	A Handloom Weaver
JOB DARBY	The Village Joiner
IKE HARDY	A Blacksmith.
MRS. RALPH BUNDERLEY	Billy's Mother.
ROSE GARDINER	A Village Girl
POLLY WARDLEY	The Cobbler's Daughter

Act 1 Scene 1. Period 70 Years Ago.

A straggling village street, with here and there cottages close to the road, and between houses set back in gardens. In a door-way of one of the houses abutting on the street a girl is standing. Another girl dressed in her Sunday best comes along. The girl in the door-way (Polly Wardley) speaks.

Polly: Nay Rose, whativver's up, what ta donn'd up to-day for? If ta goes on like this, thi Sunday cloas 'll be shabby i' no time.

Rose (Evidently in good spirits and well pleased with herself and the world): Aw! its sich a grand eemin it's a pity to stop in. An mi owd cloas lewk so bad it' t'sun. An' then,—Ah don't know whether to tell er neht, bud ezzent ta heeard?

Polly: What? Summat gooid sewerlee bi t'way thar't goin' on. Whah tha'rt all of a tremul wi' joy, Ah can see. Nou, Ah've heeard nowt. What is it?

Rose. Well, Ah mud as weel tell, fer it'll get aht sooin, if it hezent done. Ah've getten a chap.

Polly: Aw aye, when? Who is he? Some fowk are lucky. Where does he come fro'. Come on, tell us all abaht it? Ah'm all o' pins an' needles to hear.

Rose: 'Aw, Ah let on him at Whinorth Tide. Tha knaws mi ont Barbara 'at lives at t' Gaumless. Shoo ax'd mh to go ower an' help 'em at t' Tide time, so Ah went. An' bonny an' threng they wor. Evverybody hed hallidah. An' Ah think Ah nivver saw sich a lot fer enjoyin' ther sen, what wi' crecket matches an' seck races an' donkey races, an' Ah cahnt tell the' what i' t' afternooin. An' then 'T' Tide i' t' tahn-gate at t' neet, it wor a regler hullaballoo, both t' Monday an' Tuesday. An' t' Sunday worn't so quiet. Ivvery day ivverybody wor donn'd

up, t' lads an' lasses i' perticler. Well, we wor so threng at mi onts, Ah heddn't mich of a choice mi sen. Bud at t' Monday at t' neet a lass 'at lives t' next door comm' an' said, "Hev'nt yeh been intut t' Tide?" "Nou," Ah said. "Come on then," shoo said. So we went dahn intut Tahn-gate. An' Ah'm sewer we heddn't been stood there aboon a minit, when two young chaps comm' up 'at knew Sarah,—that wor her 'at wor wi' mh. "Aren't yeh bahn intut t' swinging' boat?" they said tul us. "Nou," Ah said, "it's to' flaysum' fer me." "Aw, it's all reyt," said one o' t' young chaps, "Ah'm treatin'," an' afore we knew where we wor we'd gotten up intut boat, an' it wor off. Well it worn't long afore Ah wor sick, sick as a Tewit. An' they hed to stop t' boat, an' let mh get aht, an' one o' t' young chaps gat aht wi' mh, an' walk'd mh up t' Tahn-gate. As sooin ommost as Ah wor aht o' t' thing Ah wor all reyt, an' Ah said to t' young chap, "Yeh'd better go back an' heh yer swing aht." "Nowt o' t' sort," he said, "Come on, Ah'll buy yeh a tide-in." An' whativver Ah said, he wod loaden mh up, wi' all sorts o' things off t' stalls. An' when we comm to mi onts, he march'd reyt in wi' mh, an' as he knew mi ont shoo ax'd him to hev his supper. Ah cahnt reckon it up nah, bud he tewk all bi storm, talkin' an' jokin' an' mackin ivverybody laugh. Time must ha flown, fer it wor mid-neet directly. An' then he hed to go. As he wor a stranger, Ah cudden't mack a fuss on him, bud it did seem when he wor goin' 'at Ah'd knawn him fer years, an' Ah fair felt Ah cahnt tell hah, when he said "Ye'll be here tomorn at t' neet?" Ah said "Aye," hardly knawin what Ah said er meant. "Ah'll come an' foteh yeh then," he said. An' Ah didn't say nou.

Polly: An' he comm'?

Rose: Aye, an' nowt wod fit bud Ah mud go rahud t' Tide wi' him, an' a lot more, bud as Ah couldn't

bi spared fer long, we went fer awhile, an' then he wod come back wi' mh to mi onts. Well, this wor Tuesday at t' neet, t' last day o' t' Tide, an' t'-day Ah hed to come home, an' Ah hed to get done what Ah could i' good time an' frame off. Well, when Ah wor ready to start, there he wor an' he begged so hard (an' Ah wanted him so), 'at Ah let him go wi' mh. An' he comm all t' way. Nah, that's abaht all. He's been ivvery Wednesday at' t' neet sin', an' he's comin' to-neet. Bud Ah thowt tha'd ha heeard.

Polly: Neht a word. Bud what abaht Billy Bunderley, what'll he heh to say?

Rose: It duzzent matter what he says.

Polly: Aw! Ah ollus thowt yeh wor a bit extra thick.

Rose: Aye happen, bud we nivver reyt courted tha knaws.

Polly: Aw, Ah don't knaw. Billy's a bit slauh atha say. Bud Ah've seen him lewkin at the', an' tha knaws t' lads used to plague him abaht the'.

Rose: That wor nowt bud fun.

Polly: Bud if Billy's hed the' set aht fer him, he'll noan like this t'other chap comin' an' cuttin' him aht.

Rose. Well, Billy nivver said a word to me streyt aht, an' if he hed ha' done, it 'ud a made no difference.

Polly: Ha, ha, tha can afford to be chuff nah, when tha's gotten a reyt chap. What is he? What duz he dew?

Rose: A blacksmith.

Polly: It isn't Ike Hardy? Wah Ah nobbud heeard a lot o' lasses talkin' abaht him yesterday, as we wor watchin' owd Bowker an' Miss Tempest gettin' wed. Eh! an' they wor crackin' him up, sky hegh. If it's t' same, tha's let o' thi feet Rose. Bud Ah cahnt give ower thinkin' o' Billy, fer Ah'm sewer he fancied the'. An' tha moant ferget 'at Billy's mother's a nice bit o' land of her awn. When some o' t' lads are hev'in' him on a bit, they call him t' young squire.

Rose: Young squire er owd squire, land er no land, Billy's nowt to me, an' nivver wor. Bud Ah see my man comin' Aye yeh're reyt, it's Ike Hardy, see here he comes. (Ike Hardy comes on the scene.)

Polly: Lets hev a word wi' him, then Ah'll tell the' what Ah think abaht him, neht i' front o' his face, aw nou. (Ike comes towards them. When he has shaken hands with Rose, she says:—)

Rose: This is my particular friend Polly—Mr. Hardy. We wor just hev'in' a bit o' talk.

Ike: Nobbud a bit, it's a pity to breck intult then. Nah what wor yeh talkin' abaht if it's a fair question?

Polly: Cahn't yeh guess?

Ike: Happen Ah could bud Ah'd rayther neht.

Rose: If yeh could yeh'd better neht.

Ike: Wor it abaht—(Rose puts her hand up to his lips.)

Rose: Don't guess, it's unlucky.

Ike. All reyt, come on then, lets hev a walk. (Ike shakes hands with Polly.)

Polly: Rose'll hev tell'd yeh all abaht us here at Bunderley; an' sha's tell'd me what a famous place Whinorth is, where they grow all macks o' wonderfull things up to young men. There's just one thing Ah'd like to ax afore yeh go. Is ther a lot sich like as ye at Whinorth? Fer we're rayther short abaht here. That's all, off yeh go. (Exit Rose and Ike.)

Polly: My! bud he's a topper is you. Ah think t'next Tide, Ah sal etta go i't' swingin' boat. An' if ther's one sich like as Ike abaht Ah sal bi sick mi sen. Rose is lucky an' no mistack. Bud Billy! gurt sackless Billy, Ah wonder what he'll ettah say nah, fer Ah'm sewer he wor sweet on Rose. But he's reyt sarved is t'gaumless beggar, fer he'd nivver ha ax'd her. Billy wants to stick to his mother, that's Billy shop. Bud here he comes, an' Tom Wotteras. Tom'll bi stuffin' him, er tryin', Ah'll bet owt.

Tom: Hello Polly, what time is it?

Polly: Bed-time fer sich as ye.

Tom: Hah's that?

Polly: To keep yeh aht o' mischief.

Tom: Does to hear what sha sez, Billy?

Billy: Aye, Ah hear reyt eniff, shoo's a sharp tongue hez Polly.

Tom: Well done Billy. Bud here, Ah say Polly, hev yeh heeard owt o' somedy comin' a-courtin' Rose Gardiner?

Polly: Aye, an' if ye'd been two minits sooiner, yeh could 'a both heeard an' seen him yer sen.

Billy: It's true then?

Polly: True? aye; tha's hung fire to long, tha wants to breeten, er tha'll ollus bi to' latt.

Billy: What's to say Tom?

Tom: Nay, Polly here's dewin all t'talkin'. Shoo seems to know what's reng. Bud it's a bit bold to come reyt intu't tahn, an' walk off wi' one o' t' best lewkin' lasses, baht awther axin leave er owt, as far as Ah knaw. Hev' wh to stand it Billy?

Billy: Nou!

Tom: That's reyt, nah we knaw where we are.

Polly: Aye, an' that's abaht all, fer owt 'at awther o' ye'll dew 'll neht mack mich difference.

Tom: Does ta hear that Billy? Polly, tha's a poor opinion o'us two.

Polly: Aye! bud Ah can alter it, when Ah see yeh frame yer sen, an' dew sommat'at's worth dewin'.

Billy: What sort of a chap is he?

Polly: Aw! yeh don't see one like him ivvery day. A strong, grand lewkin chap. He'll stand six feet i' his stocking's, an' belt accordinly. An' sich a sweet face, an' ees like stars—ther's breed yonder.

Tom: Neht brocken-winneded donkey, er cart-horse bred uns like Billy an' me, that's what tha'rt thinkin'?

Polly: Ah didn't say so. Bud I cahnt help it if it is so, ye knaw t'best. Ye'd better see him, an' then lewk i' t' seemin' glass, that 'll finish it.

Tom: Ah think we'd better go Billy, er ther'll bi nowt for it fer us bud gettin dahn o' wer hands an' knees like owd Nebecudnazer. Bigum! Polly, bud he must be a switcher this Whinorth chap. He'll hetta set up a harem, if all tother lasses gets as smittled wi' love as thee an' Rose hez.

Polly: If yeh didn't want to know yeh suddent' lia' axed. I'm noan smittled as tha calls it. Bud Ah can see when Ah lewk at owt, t'same as other fowk, that's all.

Billy: Does ta say he's a gurt chap? Is he as big as me?

Polly: Nou, he isn't as big as thee, i' monny a way.

Billy: What does sha mean?

Tom: Hah dew I know, an' Ah think Ah woddent ax her if Ah wor thee. Shoo mud tell the' summat tha duzzent want to know.

Billy: Nah reyt fair Polly, does ta think this chap's summat aht o' t' common line?

Polly: Ah dew, bud as Ah've nobbud seen him abaht five minits, an' hezzent spocken aboon twenty words to him, ner him to me, Ah sudent set up to be his judge. Bud Ah think he's a topper. So nah yeh hev' it.

Billy: Wod ta call Tom an' me toppers if tha wor talkin' to onnybody-else? Ah know tha'rt to keen o' hevin' us on, to say it to wer face.

Polly: Well, as it's to yer face, Ah'll leave it, if yeh don't mind.

Tom: Give ower tryin' to get heven wi' Polly, fer tha'll nivver dew it Billy. Shoo tacks t'shine aht o' most fowk does Polly. Ah don't know where shoo's pick'd her tongue up.

Polly: Well we're nobbud hauf cousins thee an' me, as fowk reckon relations, bud we're mich nearer ner that if talkin' to mich hez owt to dew wi' it. Tha's nowt to leearn i' t'tongue line. Bud botheration tack yeh both; fer Ah've a lot o' loaves i' t'oven. They'll bi burn'd black, wol Ah'm javerin' wi' ye two.
(Exit Polly.)

Billy: Shoo's a sharp lass is Polly, doesn't ta think so Tom?

Tom: If shoo wor hauf as sharp Ah sud like her twice as weel. Bud nivver heed Polly, shoo can tack care of her sen, shoo's fit to len'.

Billy: What Ah want to knaw is, hah are we bahn to stop this new courter? Tha happen didn't knaw Ah'd a fancy fer Rose. An' here this chap's come an' ta'en her fro under mi nose.

Tom: Tha wants to tell him tha weant stand it, an' then if he turns stupid, give him a gooid hidin, that mud stop him.

Billy: What! A reyt stand up feyt?

Tom: Aye, that mud sattel his hash for him.

Billy: Bud what if he sattled my hash. Then Ah sud be wahr ner ivver. Ah sud heh nawther woman ner glory.

Tom: Well, as tha wants him stopp'd, hah wod it be to hev a talk wi' Rose an' get her to seek him? That's t' easiest way. Tha can tell her 'at tha'd all bud ax'd her thi sen, an' see what shoo says. Shoo may just heh browt this whipper snapper fro Whinorth, to spur thee on a bit. Tha's been owd eniff an' big eniff to get wed monny a-while nah; buck up an' tell her.

Billy: Ah'm flayd it's to' latt.

Tom: Hah's ta knaw? Tha cahnt see inside a woman's mind, an' if ta could, tha woddent be able to reckon her up. Hez ta ivver ax'd her?

Billy: Nou, bud Ah think shoo guess'd.

Tom: Tha's guess'd 'at shoo's guess'd, 'at some-day if t'world went on long eniff, tha mud ha' tell'd her 'at tha thowt a lot abaht her, is that it?

Billy: That's abaht it, bud duzzent it sahd a bit silly?

Tom: Just a trifle.

Billy: Well it's no joke, ther'll etta be summat done. Hah wod it be if wh stopp'd him an' made him pay t'pitcher?

Tom: Just the varry thing. Ah wor thinkin' o' that mi sen. An' then if he turns rahsty, we can ride him o't' steng, er duck him i' t'river, er

heh some sort of a mayluk, an' if he isn't reyt determined on Rose it mud breck him off. We can get lots o' t' lads to help fer t'chonce o' some ale, an' ther' woddent be so mich risk fer thee nawther, ez ther' wod if tha challenged him aht to feyt. Bud feytin' 'ud be more certain if tha felt sewer o' thi man.

Billy: Well, we can try pitcherin' t'first. Ah'm noan so keen o' feytin'.

Tom: Neht fer Rose?

Billy: Well, tha sees Tom, Ah blame her ommost as mich as him; shoo's noan forced to go wi' him, i'sha?

Tom: Nou; an' it wod be a mullock of a doo if—Ah say if—tha leathered him an' drave him away, an' then shoo woddent hev owt to dew wi' the'. An' then if he happened to gie thee a gooid hidin', an' then tha fun' aht at t'after 'at shoo gloried in it, tha woddent lewk so grand, an' tha'd feel as bad as tha lewk'd.

Billy: Bigow! suddent Ah. Bud Ah think Ah could get on wi' Rose, if this t'other chap 'ud keep away. Bud hah sal we frame to pitcher him?

Tom: Aw! we mun run up agean him when he's left Rose. It woddent dew to tackle him wol shoo wor there, shoo'd scream an' mack sich a hullabaloo. An' it mud turn Rose more agean the' ner ivver.

Billy: 'Aye, tha'rt reyt, athasay, bud it's noan so nice studyin' fine points, when tha knaws 'at another chap's sweggerin' just nah wi' thy woman. Tha woddent like it thi sen.

Tom: Nah just as tha's a mind. It's thy bother tha knaws, an' tha'll want to be t'lead horse i' gettin' aht on't. Ah nobbut thowt tha woddent like us to stop 'em together, an' begin bletherin' abaht t'pitcher. Shoo mud think tha wor wantin' to get drucken on t'cheap. Fer ivverybody knaws tha duzzent thraw mich brass abaht.

Billy: Hab the divul can Ah when Ah nivver get hod on't? Mi mother keeps mh' tight Ah can tell the'. Ah just get so much fer spendin' brass, an' it duzzent go far.

Tom: Ah don't want to knaw what tha gets, Ah nobbud knaw tha'rt reckon'd a bit skinny to heh brass. Bud come: hev' wh to tackle him er we hev'n't?

Billy: Aw aye, bud Ah thowt tha said some o' t'other young chaps 'ud like to hev a hand i' t'job.

Tom: 'Aye, bud wol we're huntin' them, wer man may be off. Sewerley us two can tackle one, an' thee sich a terror.

Billy: Bud Ah've nowt agean t'chap, Ah don't knaw him, Ah've nivver seen him.

Tom: Come, tha'rt noan flayd ar'ta? Nowt agean him? Ah nivver heeard sich talk; wah, if it hed ha been a Frenchman we sud ha been i' t'thick o' a duel afore nah; but if tha's nowt agean him, we'll go home to bed. That'll happen be t'safest place fer us. Nowt agean him? What abaht Rose?

Billy: 'Aw, aye, Ah'd forgotten Rose. Come on, we'll tackle him. Bud if t'other young chaps are bahn to hev a share o' t'pitcher, weant they want a share o' t'tacklin'? And if we get him on to a steng, we cahnt both hug him, an' hod him on.

Tom: We mayn't get as far as that, an' he may tip up withaht mich of a row. Bud as tha duzzent seem so extra up o' t'job, we'll ax Joe Egbert here, to join us. (Enter Joe. Tom tells him what they are about.) Come on Joe tha'rt just wer man. Tha likes a bit of a maylock, an' a gooid drink at t'end on't. We hev 'em both on tap. Here's Billy ranty mad cos a chap fro' Whinorth's comin' a courtin' his woman. Ar'nt ta Billy?

Billy: Ah'll tack tult Ah'm noan so suited.

Tom: Noan so suited. (Pointing to Billy.) He's just ranty mad Ah tell the', i' t'boddem on him. So we're on t'lewk aht for him. He's been walkin aht wi' Rose somewhere to neet, an' when he's ta'en her home, he's bahn to etta pay t'pitcher er get what for. Tha duzzent knaw where ther's a steng handy?

Joe: Nou; let's see nah; we could get one athasay at

t'cartwreet shop. Bud he mud slip us wol we wor fotehin it. Which way will he come?

Tom: Ah'm neht reyt sewer, bud varry like they'll ha been threw t'wood, an' 'll come back up t'Boggard Loin. He'll leave Rose at their hahse, an' then if he macks streyt fer hoam he'll be forced to come this way.

Joe: What soart of a chap is he? Deh yeh knaw what they call him?

Tom: It's Ike—Ike Summat. He's a blacksmith.

Joe: Aw, Ah've seen him, he wor shoein' horses at Whinworth Fair.

Tom: It'll be t'same chap. Dost think Billy here could band him?

Joe: Band him? Aye, he doesn't weigh as mich bi two stone as Billy.

Tom: Dost hear that Billy?

Billy: Aye, but Ah thowt it wor a company job, wor pitcherin'.

Tom: Aw aye, of course; bud he's thy special enemy. An' we'll see fair play, wea'nt we Joe?

Joe: Aye, we will so. Bud who's you? It isn't him? It is, it's nobody else.

Tom: Nah then, come on. Let's stop him afore he gets intah t'crewked road. (The three hurry across the street and as they come near the advancing figure they all shout.) Pitcher, pitcher, pitcher! (As they hustle round him he moves about trying to keep them in front of him. The three keep up the cry of "Pitcher" and Ike manouvreing not to be surrounded, shouts).

Ike: What d'ye want? What heh yeh agate? (In the scuffling he gets his back against a wall.) Nah then, fair dooes. One at once. (The three stand off a few yards.)

Tom: It's just thy chance Billy.

Billy: What's ta mean?

Tom: We'll let yeh hev it to yer two sens, an' t'winner tacks t'lass.

Ike: All reyt. I'm ready if it's one at once.

Billy: Ah thowt we wor pitcherin'?

Tom: Aw, yeh duffer. Tha'll nivver get as gooid a

chance agean. Bud stand aht o' t'gate. Lewk here Ike—or whatever they call the'—tha knaws t'rules Ah expect? If one o' us went to Whinworth courtin' we sud ettah pay t'pitcher, an' tha'll ettah pay. Tha's come an' ta'en Billy's lass reyt fro under his nose, an' he's so gooid natured as to let the' off if tha'll pay t'pitcher.

Billy: Here, hold on; Ah nivver said so.

Tom: Nou, tha didn't; bud tha didn't dew t'other thing, so tha's missed thi chance.

Ike: What d'yeh want?

Tom: Nay, we leave it to the'. Summat han'some Ah sud think, when t'lass is so bonny. Five shillin' er hawf-a-chrahn, just to whet wer whistles. It's a cheap get-off.

(Ike puts his hand in his pocket, and hands them half-a-crown.)

Tom (taking it): That's reyt. Come on wi' us an' hev a glass.

Ike: Nay, nay, I've ower t'hill to go an' a bit farer. Nou, nou, Ah'll say gooid-neet. Which is Billy?

Tom (points to Billy): This.

Ike: Gooid neet then Billy; gooid neet. (Turns down 't'Crewked Loin' and passes out of sight.)

Tom: Nah then, come on. Tha'll hev to stand another hawf-chrahn Billy.

Billy: What mun I stand for? Ah'm noan so suited.

Tom: Aw nou? What's t'matter nah?

Billy: Wah, it seems to me 'at he's bowt his-sen in wi' hawf-a-chrahn, an' Ah wanted shut on him altogether. It'll noan dew fer me.

Tom: Well, tha'd a chance o' tacklin' him to-neet, an' tha woddent.

Billy: Ah mun see Rose t'first. Ah'm noan bahn to feyt for a woman 'at cares nowt abaht meh.

Tom: Nay, that's no soart of a way o' goin' on. Tha wants to bash thi man; t'woman 'll be all reyt then, wea'nt sha, Joe?

Joe: Aw aye, Billy. Tha'll hev a better chance if thart t'maister. They like t'top dog, dew women.

Billy: Ah wish we heddent ta'an his hauf-crahn, Ah nauther want him ner his hauf-crahn. What Ah want, is fer him to keep his heels this way.

Tom: What ta madlin' an' talkin' abaht. Tackin' t'hauf-crahn macks no difference. If tha wants Rose, tha mun auther get her to give you Whinorth chap up, er frame like a man an' stop him. Bud tha weant tack thi chance when tha gets it.

(From a joiner's shop near sounds of work are heard.)

Joe: Hellow, what's owd Job agate at this time o' t'neet? A coffin happen. Let's go in, we can hev t'fotchin' o' ale in there.

(They try the street door but find it fast.)

Tom: Job 'll noan hev us kallin' if we bring nowt. We'll go fer t'ale, an' then we can get in at t'other door. (Exit the three.)

Curtain.

Act 1 Scene 2.

A joiner's shop. The Joiner working at his bench. Voices heard at the door. Somebody tries the door, which is fast.

Job Darby: Holloa there. Who is it? Ah'm threng, Ah cahnt dew wi' bein' brocken off. (Job goes to the door.) Who is it? Ah'm threng Ah tell yeh.

Tom (from outside): Job, it's ye, isn't it?

Job: Aye, Ah'm workin' ower a bit. Who is it, an' what's ta want?

Tom: Ther's Billy an' me an' Joe, we've a pitcher full o' ale 'at's goin' sahr, an' we want yeh to help us aht wi' t'job.

Job: Aw, that's it is it. Wah it's a pity to let it spoil. (He unbolts the door, and the three come in, Tom carrying the pitcher.) Where hev yeh samm'd that up?

Tom: Tell him Billy, it's like a mack o' thine.

Billy: Nay it isn't, I wish we'd ne'er hed it.

Tom: Ger aht wi' the', yeh cauf-heead, t'ale's all reyt onnyway, so give ower gruntin' abaht it. Yeh

see Job it's this way. Ther's a chap fro Whinworth 'at's taan a fancy to Rose Gardiner.

Job: Aye an' a bonny lass shoo's grown. Ah wor nobbud wotchin' her as sha went past o' Sunday to t'Church.

Tom: 'Aye, ye'll agree wi' Billy Ah can see. Billy's hed his ee on her a while. Bud this Whinorth chap's snapp'd her up. We don't knaw reyt hah er when, bud it began somewhere abaht Whinorth Tide. Well! he—Ike summat they call him—'s comed sweggerin' bold as brass an' walk'd Rose off as if he'd bowt an' paid for her. We've nobbud just pick'd it aht. An' Billy here's aht of his heead abaht it. Joe an' me, well' we're a sort o' sleepin' pairtners, bud we want to see reyt done. That's it, isn't it Joe?

Joe: Aye, as far as Ah can mack it aht; Billy here wanted this chap pitcherin', 'cos he thowt it 'ud stop him. An' nah when we've getten t'pitcher he's wahr mad ner ivver. Bud Ah don't see 'at we owt to let t'ale go sahr just to please Billy, an' if he doesn't sup his share, he's a bigger foil ner Ah tewk him to be.

Job: Aye, aye, Ah see, bud it's a funnish job, bud we can have a tot a-piece to bi goin' on wi' as hah it is, an' if it turns sahr o' Billy's stomack, we'se some on us be able to sup his share.

Tom: That's t'way to lewk at it. Come on. (Tom tots out the ale. He offers it first to Job, then to Joe, and last to Billy. Billy, looking very stupid, shakes his head.)

Billy: Nou Ah weant.

Tom: Weant what?

Billy: Ah weant sup ale' at he's paid for. Bud Ah'll pay for't mi sen.

Tom: Ah's begin sooin to think things are goin' reng all rahnd, Thee, (to Billy) wantin' to pay.

Billy (sheepishly): If yeh'll send him his hauf crahn back, Ah'll pay, an' yeh can call this my ale.

Joe: Gooid owd Billy, Nah tha frames. We can manage that Tom.

Tom: Aw we weant stick fast, as long as t'ale's all reyt.

(Billy fumbles in his pocket, finds a half-crown, and gives it to Tom.)

Billy: Nah tha'll bi sewer an' send him it.

Tom: Reyt, he can trust me cahnt he Joe? (Tom winks at Joe.)

Joe: Ah'll tack it mi sen, afore we'll bi bet wi't.

Tom: Come on then Billy, tack thi tot, an' lets hev a bit o' peace. (Tom hands a tot of ale to Billy, then turns to Job, who is going on with his work.) Whativver heych agate workin' so latt? Ah thowt when Ah saw t'leet, at it must be a coffin, bud Ah'd nivver heeard tell at onnybody wor deead.

Job: Nay, when Ah'd hed me drinkin', ahstead o' fallin' asleep o' t' harstun', Ah bethowt mah of a little job 'at Ah'd set aht to dew sometime. Tha knaws that little curly toppin' 'at Ah'm granfather tul? tha'll heh seen him rowlin' abaht i' t'muck, Ah'd promised him a barra, a to'thre wick sin, an' he's nivver letten mh alone sin'. So Ah thowt Ah'd come an' get it made.

Tom: Ah see, An' he's a taistril an' all. He brack us a windah nubbud t' last week.

Job. Wah, Ah nivver heeard abaht it.

Tom: Nou, Ah gav him a gooid skelpin' ahstead, Ah thowt it 'ud dew fer a thinkin' on. T' young begger, Ah' fan, wor aimin' at t'eat, he miss'd t'eat, bud t'stone comm' beng threw ahr windah. As Ah happen'd to be i' t'hahse Ah ran aht, an he wor emeng a lot more sich like. Who threw that stone?" Ah said. "I did," he said. An' he seem'd nawther sham'd ner flay'd wi't t' job. Come, Ah thowt, tha wants streytenin' up a bit, so Ah gav him it.

Job: Bud Ah'll pay for' t'windah.

Tom. Ye'll dew nowt o' t'sert.

Job: Aw bud Ah will. An' he tewk tult?

Tom: Like a man.

Job: That'll dew. He sal hev his barra, if Ah work all t'neet.

(Billy and Joe are sat on the joiner's bench with the ale jug between them. Tom speaks.)

Tom: Here Ah say, keep that tot movin' we may want another fetchin'. Go on Billy, tha wants a sup extra to get thi spirits up. (Tom comes and takes the pitcher and tot, and everybody has another drink.)

Joe: Ah say chaps, we'se etta dew summat to help Billy aht o' this bother, Ah suddent like it mi sen. What do ye think Job?

Job: Ah'm capt this chap dar come. Which way did yeh say he went?

Tom: Dahn t' crewk'd loin.

Job: Deh yeh think he's a Whinorth lad bred an' born?

Tom: Ah hardly think so, but what maks yeh ax?

Job: Cos if he wor he'd noan come an' go i' t'neet so mich.

Tom. Aw nou, what deyeh mean? Ah've heeard abaht t'boggard, that's it 'isent it? Bud it hezzent been seen i' ahr day.

Job: Nou, happen neht, bud it hez been seen. It's flayd monny a one ommost to deeath.

Tom: What's it like, heh ye ivver seen it?

Job: Nou, but Ah've heeard mi granmother tell. Aw it's an' awful seet they say 'at's seen it. A gurt thing all donn'd i' white, wi' a tremendous gurt bald heead, an' two een like saucers. Billy here sud knaw all abaht it, fer it's supposed to be t' ghost o' one o' Billy's foreelders.

Billy: Nay Ah don't knaw mich. Ah've ax'd mi mother abaht it monny a time, bud shoo weant talk abaht it.

Job: Wah, as Ah've heeard, long sin when t' Scotch used to come plunderin' dahn into England, a lot on 'em hed come one neet, an' driven off all t'squire cattle, and wor mackin' fer t'hills aboon Skipton. Then Billy's fore-elder gat all his fowk together i' t'morning' an' after 'em. T'Scotch hed gotten an hahr er two start, bud they wor hampered wi' t'cattle; so after ridin' hard, t'chaps fro' abaht here com up wi' 'em reyt at t'top o' t'moor, an' there they'd a reyt

pitched battle fer an hahr er two. I' t'end all t'Scotch hed been killed bud one an' he made off helter-skelter when he saw he'd no chonce. It's allus thowt he must ha'been t'leader o' t'geng. Well, nobody framed to follow him bud t'squire, an' he fair yelled wi' madness when he saw t'chap wor bahn to get away; "I'll spill his blood, I'll spill his blood," he yelled, an' away he went after t'Scotchman. Well, he hedn't goan far when them 'at wor watchin' lost seet on him, an' they could see t'Scotchman flyin' hawf a mile off. As they followed, neht knawin' what to mack on't, they comm to a bog, an' there i' t'black muck an' watter they saw 'at summat hed disturbed it varry lattley, it wor alive as if summat hed just sunken in tult. An' that wor t'end o' Marmaduke la Bunderley. Ah've nivver seen t'ghost o' t'owd Giant, fer he wor famous fer his book (bulk), bud he's haunted t'wood below t'tahn ivver sin. It hesn't been seen lattly 'at Ah've heeard on, bud it mud turn up onny neet; an' so nobody goes threw 'at knaws abaht it.

Tom: Ah'll tell the' what Billy; if tha could get this gurt-gurt granfather o' thine to tackle yon Whinorth chap, an' flay him wol, he fair dithered in his shooin, he'd happen keep away fro Rose.

Billy: Ah wish Ah'd framed an' faced him up to-neet when we wor pitcherin him.

Tom: T'same owd way! Tha lets t'lass slip threw thi fingers bi being to' slawh, then tha lets thi powcher go when tha'd a chonce o' nailin' him. Tha'rt to' slawh fer a burryin', tha'll be to' latt fer thi awn if tha doesn't breeten up a bit.

Joe: Nah just listen to me, an' ye tew Job. T'barra'll wait. Ah hev it.

Job: Hez what?

Joe: A way aht fer Billy.

Tom: Come on, let's hev it then.

Joe: Well, Billy's a gurt chap, if he isn't as big as his gurt-gurt-gurt granfather; nah if he wor rigged up like a boggard an' met this Ike an his lass,

he mud give him sich a flay 'at he'd nivver come agean. What d'ye think?

Job: Ah don't knaw; bud if he's to wait o' t'real thing comin' an' dewin' it fer him, this Ike mud ha' wed Rose, an' all be ower'd an' done wi' afore then.

Tom: Joe, tha'rt a sharper chap ner ah thowt tha wor. Wah, this'll save all feytin' an' bother o' that sort. Bud Billy couldn't manage it.

Joe: Tha could dew it reyt as owt, couldn't ta Billy? Thee shut up Tom, tha doesn't knaw Billy.

Billy: Aw, altha say Ah could dew it; bud wod he be flay'd?

Joe: Flay'd? Oh, he'd be flay'd reyt eniff.

Billy: An' Rose?

Tom: Shoo'd scream "murder" wod Rose, an' run like a hare, if shoo worn't to' terrified.

Billy: Ah suddn't like to terrify her so mich.

Tom: Tha's no 'casion to bother thi heead abaht that, shoo 'd sooin come abaht. It's t'man 'at mun be flay'd. If he's a bit of a dufer, he'll just hook it an' nivver stop whol he's i'bed i' Whinworth. Bud Ah don't see hah to frame to rig Billy up.

Job: Rig him up? Oh that's easy. Ah've made monny a lot o' false faces fer t'mummers. Ah'll mack a thing to fit his neck an' shoolders, then Ah'll rig a thing up like a gurt heead an' paint it. It'll ettah hev two hoils to lewk aht on, an' two aboon as big as saucers wi' thin red paper ower 'em; an' then ther wants nowt bud a cannell stuck behint t'hoils an' he'll lewk flay-some eniff. An' then wi' a gurt bed-sheet to thraw ower his body Billy 'll mack sich a bog-gard as ther nivver wor i' yon wood afore.

Tom: What's ta say, Billy?

Billy. Ah'd rayther hev a bit o' time to study abaht it.

Joe: That's all reyt, but wol tha'rt studyin' this chap's gettin' thicker an' thicker wi' Rose. This is a job 'at weant wait. Bud please thisen, it's thi awn lewk aht.

Tom: Aw, Billy's gam' eniff when he knaws ther's no danger.

Billy: Ah'll tell the' what it is Tom, Ah'm no more flay'd nur thee. Ah nobbud wanted to be sewer 'at Ah saw threw it, hah it 'ud work.

Joe: It'll work; what's to stop it? Tha just plants thisen wheer they 'll come past, behint a tree, an' when they're comin' tha comes aht an bel-lers aht some sort o' awful talk, an' t'job's done; shoo screams, happen falls, or hooks it, an' he's so flay'd whol he nivver comes agean.

Billy: Wah, it's happen as easy a way o' gettin' shut on him as ther is. Ah'm on. T'pitcherin' wor no gooid.

Tom: Nah ther: Job'll ettah mack t'tacklin' fer t'heead, I'll bring t'sheet. Let's see—it's Wednesday to-neet, we can be ready bi Setter-day.

Job: I can. An' thee Billy?

Billy: All reyt. It's varry gooid on yeh all, Ah wish we'd time fer another fotchin'.

Tom: We'll hev it o' Setterday ahstead; Job wants to finish his barra an' he nivver will if we stop wi' him. Come on.

Job: Nay, Ah'll go wi' yeh, 'Ah can finish it i' t'mornin'. An' he brack yahr windeh, did he? (Puts out the lights, and exit all.)

(Curtain.)

Act 2: Scene 1.

Job's joiner's shop. Job alone. He holds up the head he has made to fit up Billy to play the Bunderley ghost. On the bench there is a little new painted wheel-barrow. Little George Shepherd, the grandson, with his curls, comes in to have a look at the barrow. Job looks and feels at the barrow, shakes his head and looks at the little chap.

Job: If tha can just wait wol to-morn, it'll be ready. Let's see the' wheel it o' t'floor. (The boy wheels the barrow, and looks up with pride at his grandfather.) I don't like to keep the' waitin' bud it isn't ready, so tha'll ettah run an' laik. (The boy goes.)

Job (Job holds up Billy's head gear): 'Ah'm neht reyt

sewer 'at ah owt to ha' back'd up yon two young divuls, Tom and Joe. They're bahn to mack a bonny hal o' yon Billy. Bud they hev' to get a bit o' sport somehah, an' it'll happen dew Billy gooid. As he is nah, he's like a gurt lump o' doaf 'at's nawther bak'd ner letten alone. He's no ill in him, ner gooid nawther 'at Ah ivver heeard on. But a man sewerley wants to be more ner that. T' first Bunderley 'ud a stood a poor chonce Ah guess, if he'd been o' t'same mack as Billy. Ther'd ha been noan o' yon tombstones i' Bunderley Church, wi' t'tale o' who they wor an what they'd done at home an' abroad, if they'd been o' Billy's sort. Ther's a deal o' talk nah abaht breedin' back, an' mixin' sorts wol we finnd one wi' wings on, bud it seems to me Billy's gotten a long way back to t'clodhopper. Ah'm a bit of radical an' ollus wor, bud after all ther's sommat i' breed. Bud Billy's a miss thraw. An' he'll bi t'lord o' t'manor if owt wor to happen yon wenkle lad up at t'hall. (Job takes up the head-gear. He lights the candle and puts the head in a dark corner of the room, and puts his other light out to get the full effect.) Ah think it sud dew. Poor Rose, shoo'll think it's t'owd lad 'at's come to fotch her happen. Bud owd Nick i' a white sheet 'ud be a rayther new sort o' divul. (Job stands back and has another look, then goes forward and puts the candle out, and lights his candles for his work.) Ah wonder if Billy 'll be gamm' eniff to go threw wi' t'job. It's rayther a come dahn, fer t'last hope o' t'familee to be playin' boggard fer his noble ancestor. An' t'warst on't is, its abaht all he's fit for. It's abaht time some on 'em turn'd up. He's an ill 'un is yon Tom, an' Joe's his marra, ther' just mackin' a mug o' Billy. (A noise is heard and presently Tom and Joe come into the shop.)

Tom: Well, is it ready? Hah duz it shew? Hev yeh tried t' cannel in?

Job: Aw aye, Ah've just been tryin' it. They shew all reynt does t' ees. He'll be a fahl lewkin' cus-

tomers, to come on all ov a-sudden'll Billy, wi' that on. Where's t'white sheet?

Joe: Ah've t'sheet here all reyt. Bud where's Billy? If Billy caffles we're i' t'baum-pot, fer it'll get aht.

Tom: Aw, Billy'll come, Ah've kept him primed, he's up o' t'job. Ah've made him believe 'at afore he's a week owder, he'll heh nowt to dew bud tip a wink at Rose, an' sho'll be all reyt. An' t'Whinorth chap'll be glad an' fain to keep his heels this way.

Joe: Well Ah wish he'd come, we've hed a fewh maylocks i' wer time an' this'll be as good as onny on 'em, if Billy 'll nobbud turn up. Heh wh time to try it on? If he comes he cahnt be monny minits.

Tom: Ah nivver knew Billy afore time, bud he darn't be to' latt to-neet, er he mud etta go boggardin' when them 'at he wants to flay's been an' goan. S'al Ah put it on?

Job: Aye, lewk sharp. (Job lights the candle, and Tom puts the thing on, and marches about in the room.)

Tom: Let's see; what's that 'at t'squire yell'd, when he went fer t' Scotchman? "I'll spill his blood, spill his blood, an' grund his bones, I'll spill—

Joe: What's that? Ther's somedy wotchin us, hear yeh. (A slight sound of laughter is heard.) Ah knaw that laugh, Ah'm sewer Ah've heeard that laugh afore. (Joe rushes out of the shop, and in a short time returns. Tom, who has taken the head gear off, says:

Tom: Did ta see onnybody?

Joe: Neht plain, bud Ah'm capt if a woman didn't slip dahn Johnson Ginnel just as Ah gat intut street. Nah who could it be? Yeh hevn't tell'd onnybody abaht wer doo?

Tom: Neht a face.

Job: Ah've nivver mention't it nawther.

Joe: Ah wish Ah could bethink mh whose laugh it wor. It'll come to mh. What's that? (Joe looks towards the door.)

Tom: Billy. (The door opens and Billy comes in.)

Joe: Hello, Billy, is that thee? Tom's been tryin' this thingunmijig on. Bigum he'll be a pluck'd un 'at dar face it. Are to bahn to try it on?

Billy: Ah'm noan up 'o this job chaps, Ah ommost wish we'd nivver thowt on't.

Joe: Tha'rt noan bahn to back aht on't nah sewerlee, an' Job gotten all ready for the'.

Billy: Nou, Ah'll go threw wi' t'job, bud it's agean t'grain.

Tom: Owt'nt whi to wet t'boggard heead think yeh? If it isn't a barn, it's t'youngest boggard we know on. Come, who stands?

Billy: Aw, Ah'm payin'.

Tom: Billy, this job's dewin' thee gooid, it's lowsen'd a tap somewhere i'thee 'at's been stuck fast afore.

Billy: Tack this hauf crahn. (To Tom.)

Joe: An' tha'll ettah lewk sharp. (Joe points to the street doors.) Hear yeh? Damm ther's that laugh agean. Ah don't like it. Ah'm flay'd somebody's pick'd us aht.

Job: Neht they, it's nowt. Hah oft hear fowk laughin' an' talkin' as they go past. An' they've to be vary cute to see in here. (Tom goes out, and while he is away Billy takes up the head-gear and says to Job:)

Billy: Hah deyeh frame to put it on?

Job: It's vary simple. First of all, tha leets t'canel then tha slips t' thing ower the' heead, an' when it's hackled to thi shoolders, tha tees these bands under thi arms. Bud if Tom er Joe goes wi' the' they'll dew that.

(Billy, somewhat relieved that he has to have help in his adventure, lights the candle as directed, and tries the head on.)

Tom: Eh, Ah wish tha'd a seemin' glass. Talk abaht blood-shot ees. Tha hez 'em to some hoddin'. It's fair flaysome to me, an' Ah know all abaht it.

Billy: Deh'yeh think he'll noan stand his grund? Sud

Ah follo' him? 'Ah'm neht so fast at t'best, an' wi' this on, Ah mud fall an' lame mi'sen.

Joe: Aw, tha mun frame after him, tha's no 'casion to follo' him so far. (Tom comes in with the ale. He gives a start as if in fear when he sees Billy.)

Tom: Don't lewk inta this pitcher wi' them een, tha'll spoil t'ale if tha does. (Joe helps Billy off with the false head. Billy, evidently warm with having the thing on, blows as if coming out of a warm place.)

Billy. Give us a tot, it's smoorin' wi' that thing on.

Job: Hut is it? Hauf a minit an' Ah'll gi' the' a bit o' ventilation. (Job bores some large holes at the back of the head-piece.)

Tom: Nah abaht t'nominy. What wor it 'at t'owd squire said?

Job: Ah nobbud knaw what Ah've heeard, they say 'at t'boggard ollus says: "Spill, spill his blood, spill, spill his blood. Grund, grund his bones. Spill his blood an' grund his bones."

Joe: Come on then Billy, lets hear the' dew it.

Billy: Ah don't think Ah can dew it. Hah does it go? "Spill, spill his—

Tom: Howd on, that'll noan dew. It wants to sahd as if thi voice comm aht o' thi booits. Like this: "Spill, spill his blood." Try agean.

Billy: Spill, spill his blood—

Tom: That's better, bud rougher if tha can dew it, t'rougher an' t'better. (Billy looks round at the others.)

Job: Aw, Tom's reyt.

Joe: Aye, he's reyt, try agean Billy.

Billy: Spill, spill his blood, spill, spill his blood, grund, grund his bones, spill his blood an' grund his bones.

Tom. That'll dew. Nah then, it's time tha wor off.

Billy: Bi mi'sen?

Tom: Aye.

Joe: Nay, Ah thowt we sud ettah go wi' him. Ah've just been sayin' so.

Tom: All reyt if he'd rayther, but we mun keep aht o't t'seet.

Joe: Aw, aye; where hewah' to plant wer sen?

Tom: Fair i' t'thick o' t'wood. Ther's that gurt elm abaht a hunderd yards fro t'stee hoil. We can get all ready there an' then we can slip away, an' Billy can wait wol t' courters come ower t'stee. An then as they come up he wants to come fro behint t'tree, an' bell aht his nom. That'll dew Ah think, what's ta say Billy? It's fer thee to say, tha's t'lion's share to dew.

Billy: It's as gooid a way as onny Ah expect.

Joe: Aw it'll dew. Yeh arn't bahn wi' us Job?

Job: Nou, ye'll manidge baht me. Just let's see 'at all's reyt. (Job takes the head-gear and examines it carefully.)

Job: Yeh mun heh t'canel reyt stuck i' t'oil. It 'ud bi the divel if it gat lowse, an' Billy's heead gat a-fire. We've heeard o' hut heeaded uns bud ye'd see one then. That 'ud nivver dew.

Billy: Ther's no danger o' that, is ther?

Job: Nou Ah've made it so as it cahnt get lowse.

Joe: Ther's somedy at t'door Ah'm sewer, didn't yeh hear that? Who the hengment is it, Ah wonder? A woman Ah believe.

Job: They cahnt see Ah tell the'.

Joe: Nou bud they can happen hear.

Tom: It's nowt, come, are yeh ready? Time's gettin' on.

Job: Arn't yeh bahn to finish t'ale afore yeh go?

Tom: Aw we'll fell that as hah. (Tom tots out the ale and gives Billy an extra tot or two.) Hah's ta feel Billy?

Billy: Ah don't knaw.

Tom: Tha ommost sud ha hed a drop o' short stuff, to sparkle the' up.

Joe: Nay, if he gat fresh he'd nobbud make a mullock o' t'job. Tot t'ale aht, it'll dew t'trick. (The ale is handed round freely, and soon the pitcher is empty.)

Tom: Ye hevn't a seck happen Job, 'at we could put this in? (Points to the boggard's head.)

Job: Yes Ah hev, wait a minit. (Job goes out and brings a sack, and the head is put in.)

Tom: Nah, who's bahn to hug t'seck; thee Billy?

Billy: Nay, Ah's happen hev eniff on't when Ah get it on.

Tom. All reyt. (To Billy.) Thee an' Joe hed better be off. I'll come in a minit er two. Ye can wait at t'stee at t'edge o' t'wood. I'll bring t'seck, bud Ah moant be seen. Fer if t'gamm-keeper sees mh he'll think Ah hev it full o' gamm.

Joe: Come on then Billy. (Exit Joe and Billy.)

Job: Good neet. (To Tom.) Tha's hatched monny a doo, bud ye've a rummish gamm on to-neet, summat aht o' t'common line.

Tom: Don't blame me, Ah sud nivver ha thowt o't, ner Joe, if it heddent ha been fer yahr tale abaht t'owd squire ghost.

Job: Nah off tha goes. Ah sud ha' liked to ha' seen t'doo, bud Ah'm gettin' to' owd.

Tom: Come on wi' yeh.

Job: Nou.

Tom: Come on, Ah's happen loise t'poke, wi' t' head in if yeh don't.

Job: Nou, Ah think Ah've happen done to' mich as it is. If owd Barbara Bunderley knew what her pet Billy wor up to to-neet shoo'd rannel some on us afore bed-time.

Tom: Aye, bud yeh see sha duzzent.

Job: Bud sha may, sha will some-day.

Tom: Ah'll be goin' er Ah shan't ettah go wi' yahr gooid will. (Tom shoulders the sack and hurries off, leaving Job looking rather glum.)

Job: Ah don't knaw hah it is, bud yon young begger's in his element wi' this job. But it's bred in him, his father wor ollus t'same. If ivver us young chaps gat inta mischief he wor ollus t' ringleader. An' it's Tom 'at's at t' boddem o' this. Billy's noan up o' t'job, Ah could see that. He'd ha' back'd aht if he'd hed hauf a chance. Aw well, they mun raddle it aht ameng 'em. (Job blows the candles out and leaves his shop.)

(Curtain.)

Act 2: Scene 2.

Scene: Edge of a wood, a stile in the wall. Beyond, some large trees, with brush-wood underneath. A path-way leads from the stile past the large trees. Two figures approach in the dark. They can be seen to be Billy and Joe. They stop by the stile and sit down on the low wall.

Billy: Is it somewhere here abaht 'at t'boggard used to be seen?

Joe: So they say, bud Ah've nivver seen it mi'sen.

Billy: Does ta think onnybody's ivver seen it?

Joe: Ah nobbud knaw what fowk say. Ivverybody 'at Ah've heeard talk abaht it, seems to believe in it.

Billy: Aye, bud dat duzzent mack it so.

Joe: Nou, bud it'll be seen to-neet at onnyrate. An' if tha nobbud flays this Whinorth chap' that's all 'at matters to thee, isn't it?

Billy: Aye, bud if it duzzent, hah then? What sal I dew?

Joe: Nay, Ah don't know, tha'll ettah use thi wits, an' go threw wi' t'job i' some feshun. Ther's Tom here, with t'head at onnyrate. (Tom comes towards the stile.)

Tom: Nah then, we moant waste time, t'courters may be here onny minit. Come behint this tree. (To Billy.) Witta shove thi cap i' thi pocket, er tha'll keep it on? Ah sud keep it on. (The three go behind a tree, but are not out of sight. The head is taken out of the bag, the candle is lit and the head-gear is put over Billy's head. Then the strings are tied round his arms. The two fuss about Billy and when he is ready, Tom says.)

Tom: Tha hezzent fergetten thi nom?

Billy: What? Which?

Tom: Spill, spill,—tha knaws.

Billy: Nou, Ah can dew it Ah think, Ah've been runnin' it ower i' mi head.

Tom: Nah as sooin as ivver tha hears 'em comin' don't wait ta long, but slip aht fro' behint t'tree an' begin thi nom, an' give it a reyt grave-diggin' touch.

Billy: Where ye two bahn?

Joe: Oh, we'se noan be so far off, so as we can see him run when tha's flay'd him. (Tom and Joe retire into the wood, leaving Billy behind the tree. Shortly Ike and Rose are seen coming up to the stile; Ike gets over, and when Rose is on the top he offers to help her.)

Rose: Ah don't like goin' intu t'wood.

Ike: Come on, it's all reyt, it's a bit mooinleet.

Rose: Aye, bud this is t'wood where ther's a boggard.

Ike: Ther's what?

Rose: Hev ye nivver heeard? Aw, it's an awful seet.

Ike: There's no boggards. Nah then. (Holds out his arms to Rose.)

Rose: Nou, let's go back, it's just as nice across t'fields.

Ike: Come on. (Takes her in his arms and lifts her off the stile, and holds her.) Ah think that desarves a kuss. (Rose holds her head away, but Ike puts his arm round her neck and kisses her.) Sal we sit a bit on t'stee?

Rose: Nou, let's be goin' on.

Ike: Bud tha hesn't ge'en mh a kuss fer liftin' the dahn.

Rose: Bud tha tewk one.

Ike: Aye, but Ah want one givin'.

Rose: Ah'll owe it.

Ike: Well, Ah'll borro' it then. (Ike kisses Rose.)

Rose: Nah, sal we go?

Ike: I'm i' no hurry.

Rose: Bud Ah don't like here.

Ike: Come on then. (As they begin to move the ghost comes out from behind the tree.)

Billy (in a rather tremelo tone, shouts): Spill, spill his blood. Spill, spill his blood. Grund, grund his bones. Grund, grund his bones. Spill his blood an' grund his bones. (The ghost stalks towards the pair. Rose screams and starts to run.)

Ike: What ta flay'd on? It's nowt bud a gam'.

Rose (stops screaming): Aw bud it is, it's t'boggard. come on. (The ghost goes on shouting his nom. Rose, screaming again, runs off.)

Ike (facing the ghost): What the divil ar ta? Tha't big eniff onnyway. Let's hev a bat at the'. (Ike rushes forward and gives Billy a punch in the stomach. Billy, quite helpless with the sheet round him, gives a great 'ugh,' as if Ike had winded him. Then he makes another attempt to say his nom, but before he is half through Ike has given him several blows, one on the head, which upsets Billy. He falls heavily, and Ike pounces on to him and commences to give him a good hiding. This has but commenced when Polly Wardley rushes out from the brush wood and taking Ike when he is unaware pulls him off the prostrate boggard. Ike picks himself up and is coming again at Billy, but Polly stands in the way.)

Polly: Hold on, ye've done eniff. Ye lewk after yer sweetheart.

Ike: What heh ye to dew wi' it?

Polly: Nivver mind what Ah've to dew wi' it. Yeh don't touch him agean. Go to yer sweetheart, shoo'll be faintin', happen dein', Ah expect somewhere i' t'wood. (Ike slowly does as he is told. Polly now unties the strings round Billy's shoulders, and takes off his head-gear. Billy has not caught fire, but a lot of candle grease has run over his face.)

Polly: What a mess tha'rt in. (Polly takes her handkerchief and tries to get the grease off Billy's face.)

Billy: Lord bless the' Polly, tha'rt a angel if ivver ther' wor one.

Polly: Get up if ta hezzent hurt the'.

Billy: Eh, Polly, Ah don't know what Ah sud ha' done, er what 'ud o' come on mh, if it heddent ha been fer thee. Hah ivver did ta happen to be here? Did to know?

Polly: Nivver mind nowt abaht that nah, get up an' let's get the' aht o' this thing. Ah'se etta bi goin'.

Billy: Tha moant leave mh, Ah'm all of a tremmel. (Billy tries to get up, but stumbles and falls.) Ther's summat t matter wi' one leg. (Polly

helps Billy to get on to his feet, then he tries to walk. Slowly they come near the stile. Two men, Tom and Joe, come up. In the darkness they had missed the melle, only hearing Billy as he began his nom.)

Tom: Hello, hah's to goan on? Hez ta flay'd 'em? Did he run? We heeard Rose scream as sha ran threw t'wood. (Tom sees Polly.) Ah say. To Joe, who is a few yards behind.) Joe, ther's Polly here.

Joe: Hah's this, what tha dewin' here?

Polly: Nivver thee mind, Ah am here.

Joe: Come, Ah'll tack the' home, this is no place fer thee. Tom'll lewk after Billy.

Polly: Ah can go home mi sen, an' safer ner wi' thee. An' thee an' Tom's lewk'd after Billy an' browt him in to this pickle. Tha can tack Tom home if ta likes, Ah weant go wi' the'.

Tom: Here, Ah say Polly, Ah don't know what ta hez agate. Ah didn't knaw tha knew owt abaht t'doo. Come nah, we'll lewk after Billy.

Polly: Yeh hevent done, that's all Ah know, an' Ah'm noan bahn to leave him wi' yeh, so nah ye knaw.

Joe (looking cowed): Polly, Polly, tha knaws Ah'd ommost dew owt to please the'.

Polly: If tha wants to please me tha'll keep aht o' mi seet. (Billy tries to walk alone but cannot.)

Tom: Polly tha sees Billy's hurt his leg, away tha goes home, an' we'll bring Billy.

Polly: Ah woddent trust nawther Billy ner noabody else wi' ye two.

Joe: Nay heng it Polly, it wor all a joke. We'll mack it all rey't.

Polly: Fer ye it wor a joke, bud neht fer him. Hah can yeh mack it rey't? Go Ah say, both on ye. Ah've noan fergetten what yeh did at mi father. Go, Ah say. I'll lewk after Billy. (Polly is quite angry and Tom and Joe give way before her anger.)

Tom: Come on Joe. We's ettah leave her wi' her Billy. (Billy, holding by the branch of a tree.)

Billy: Lewk here, Tom, if tha sez a word agean Polly, Ah'll fell the' just wheer tha stands.

Tom: Tha'll what?

Billy: Ah'll fell the'; an' thee tew Joe. Polly's all t'friend Ah hev here.

Tom: What didn't ta fell Ike for? He wor t'man.

Billy: Ah couldn't fer t'sheet, an' Ah'd no 'casion, fer it's ye 'at's gotten meh into this bother, neht Ike. Ah see it nah. Ah knaw ye think Ah'm a foil, an' happen Ah am.

Tom: Nay, don't blame us; it wor to flay Ike, an' get the' Rose back.

Polly: It wor nowt o' t'sort. I knaw thee Tom. Bud Ah didn't think Joe wor as bad as thee, bud Ah knaw nah 'at he is. Ye're no friend o' Billy's ner o' nobody else; ye don't care, as long as yeh mack a hal o' fowk, what it costs 'em, as long as ye get yer laugh. Nah ye can go sweggerin to t'public-house an' tell 'em what ye've done. Fowk 'at's prahd of a job like this can't hev mich gooid in 'em. Ger aht o'mi seet.

Tom: We'se ettah go Joe.

Joe: Aye, it seems so. Nah Polly, just a word.

Polly: Ah don't want to say onny more, but Ah sall—

Billy (sadly): Don't differ abaht me; Ah can happen crammel home bi misen.

Tom: Well, we'll go then.

Joe: Polly.

(Exit Tom and Joe.)

Polly: Go. (Turning to Billy.) Nah just sit dahn here on t'stee an' let's mack the' as menseful as Ah can. What's all this? (touching the candle grease on his face.)

Billy: Ah expect it's canul grease. (Polly gets it off as well as she can, tidies his hair and straightens his tie.) Hesn't ta a hat or cap?

Billy: 'Aye, it's here i' mi pocket.

Polly: Put it on then. Nah let's see if tha can walk.

Billy: Polly, Ah said tha wor a angel. Ah'm sewer tha art.

Polly: Nivver mind whether Ah'm a angel er t'other thing. Tha wants to get home. Come, frame.

Billy: Where's t'boggard heead?

Polly: Dost ta want it agean? Eh, Billy?

Billy: Nou, Ah nobbut wanted to mesh it i'bits, er get shut on't, so as it woddent be fun'.

Polly (fetches the head): Nah, it's here. Ah'll tack it home, it'll dew to leet t'fire wi'. Come on.

Billy (gets up and tries to walk; he seems to have little use in one leg.): Ah'm flay'd— (Polly takes hold of his arm. Billy tries to walk and they move a few steps.) Mun Ah put mi arm across o' thi shoulders?

Polly: Aye, if it 'll help the' better.

Billy (does so): Nah Ah can manage.

Polly (looks up at him): Eh, bud tha'rt a gutt barn Billy.

Billy: Ah'm nowt else.

Polly: Come on, nivver heed, tha'll get ower it. (Exit both.)

(Curtain.)

Act 3: Scene I. (Some time after.)

Scene: In the wood. Polly and Billy at the stile near the place where the Boggard appeared.)

Billy: Ah don't think Ah like this walk Polly. It macks mh think what a fool Ah wor, to let Tom an' Joe have me on fer t'mug.

Polly: Well, its safe, any way, as long as we have t'boggard wi' us on ahr side.

Billy: Polly, Ah didn't think yeh'd ha' thrawn it at me like that nah 'at wer courtin'.

Polly: Eh Billy, I'm flay'd mi tongue runs away wi' mh. I shall ettah hev a bit taan off t'end, and stuck on to thine, for it's a bit short.

Billy: Is ther' nought else I'm short on? But your nobbut plaguein' mh.

Polly: O lots, and I'm in gooid earnest.

Billy: Nay Polly, yeh mack me feel fair dahn o' mi sen, an' us courtin'. It's a queer sort of courtin', isn't it, for me to be called ower t'rolls, an' shewn up?

Polly: Let's sit dahn, for I want a serious talk. I'm not satisfied.

Billy: Nah Ah knaw it's comin'. It may be all reyt, but I cahnt say Ah like it.

Polly: Billy, a man wants to be a real man.

Billy: O stop!

Polly: If ever I get wed I want my man to be a real man. For many reasons I want you to be something more than you are. The first and poorest reason, perhaps, is, that I know what folks are saying, and will say about my courting you. They will say I'm doing so because you may have money some day, and I am poor. It isn't true, for I love you for yourself, just as you are. But there's no denying the fact, that compared with what a man may be, and you could be if you tried, you are like a piece of waste land all nettles and thistles, whereas a right man is like a thriving June meadow. Now don't think I wish to offend you. But as far as I can see, at present, you are no use in the world. If you slipt out of life to-night, no work, that you are doing, would wait for a hand to do it. The world would be fed and clothed and able to carry on just the same without you, and all that you eat and drink and use would be saved. For any grist that you bring to the mill of life it would have stopped long since. Now wouldn't it? Don't look so yonderly. I'm not blaming you, but later, I mean to make you to blame, if I can make you see as I do.

Billy: Polly, Polly, hadn't we better go home? I've nivver felt like this before, what have I done to mack you talk like this?

Polly: Nothing at all. It is'nt what you've done, it's what you have not done. May be your mother it satisfied. And the world would say, or part of it, that you need not trouble to work, as with your income you can buy your way through life. But that will not do for me. Where I've got my notions I hardly know. It does not matter, anyhow, there they are. And they include as a first principle that a man or woman must do some real work, must earn their living. Now are you doing that?

Billy: Nou, an' nobody ivver hinted that I should before. I've just done as 'I liked up to nah. If I wor up in time for breakfast and in i' time for mi other meals, and gat to bed at neet nobody ivver grumbled.

Polly: Aye, and in a sense it seems a pity to rouse you out of such a comfortable existence, but I love you. That is my excuse. You are my great baby, and I want to see you walk and talk and run and leap like the best and strongest. In a sense I have had to be my own mother, mine died when I was so young, and I have never been really young as you have. You are to me like a pup, or a young lamb, or calf just gambolling through life. And you are well past the age when some purpose should have entered into your mind.

Billy: Polly whatever I am, or I am not, I love you; if I did'nt I could'nt stand all this. I am not a child.

Polly: My darling Billy, if you knew how it hurts me to pain you, you would forgive me. My only purpose is to rouse you from your thoughtless, careless way, and get you to frame as we say, to play a worthy part. Some-day, you know, you might be lord of all the neighbourhood, and have great responsibilities. For that, you know, you are now totally unfit. That is far off now, and may never come, but, apart from that, you might do something to justify your existence now.

Billy: Nay, what could I do? I'm sure I dont know.

Polly: What about farming, I have been thinking about it all day, aye many a day. Suppose you tried one of your mother's farms. Hainworth Bank, you were saying would be to let soon. I have heard you talk to other folk, about farming, as if you knew something about it.

Billy: Aye, but it's little I know about farming, but I do know a bit, as much happen as some that are farming now. But look at t'risk. I might lose t'rent, and then where would mi mother be.

Polly: There's risk no doubt, but that will make you try, and that is what I want you to do. And if I can help you in any way, it will be my delight to do so.

Billy: This is so sudden like, and I think so slowly. Don't ask me to decide now. I like t'idea well enough. I'll see what I can do.

Polly: Good, very, very good, now another thing.

Billy: Eh Polly this a queer courtin', give us a kuss, bad as I am.

Polly: Kussing will wait. There is something else I want to say.

Billy (Billy blowing as if it was tough work): Come on then. What else is there that wants alterin'?

Polly: A lot, but the one thing I want to speak about now is for outside show. The way you speak, The usual jargon used in Bunderley, is well enough for its purpose here. But it is not understood many miles beyond this parish, and you or I or anyone, who may some-day go further, or even if we don't, may meet others who come from outside the bounds, where our talk is understood, should keep up the use of the speech which is used in common by all who speak good English. You will have noticed that to-night, I have not used the dialect or not much, and you have not used it as you generally do. Very well, let us do our courting in plain English. That is what I want.

Billy: But I cannot tell my feeling as I wish if I have to do it in plain English.

Polly: O Billy, use will make it easy after a while, and we may get some fun out of the stiff way in which the unusual talk comes from our lips.

Billy: And do you want me to drop the village talk altogether?

Polly: Not at all! You must be a linguist.

Billy: A what?

Polly: A man that knows a few languages. Let me see, you will know Bunderley ordinary, English plain, and a mongrel, a kind of a mixture of both. To me, and to any whom you know are in the habit of using good English, you must use that. In the village you will of course use the dear delightful Bunderley and only the mongrel when the others fail to come.

Billy: That doesn't sound so bad, but cahnt we go on i' t'owd way?

Polly: No, it will not be seemly for you to be unable to meet men and women from all parts, on a level, and the village speech will not do for that.

Billy: But I don't like your fine English. I have to think hard and double when I talk it. Wi' t'owd sort I can go bummelin' on almost without thinking, but wi' this fancy stuff I get stuck wi' my pronouns and adjectives and adverbs.

Polly: Aye, and you want to be stuck until you get so that they drop into their places as easily as the lingo does. You have learned them all. Abel Storey who taught you, would not stand any slipping, you would have to do them right for him.

Billy: Aye, I had when I was forced, but I never could see any good in it. And when I used to put it on a bit at home for practice mi mother and t' servants used to laugh at me. I'm sure I shall be miserable if I have to talk this fine stuff always.

Polly: At first, but it is your duty. And you are a grown man now. and duty should come first.

Billy: It comes hard. What is the use of being miserable, just wi' struggling wi' this fancy talk. I know I used to get terribly feltered wi' t'adjectives and t'adverbs and t'verbs. They wor my master altogether then, and I'm frightened they will always be.

Polly: Eh Billy do look ahead a bit. If you do you will see that what I want you to do is all for the best.

Billy: How is it Polly that such things are always so hard to do? Good ways and good things should be easy to get at, and not such a trouble. I'm down about it.

Polly: That is more than I can tell, but knowing folk say it is mental drill, gymnastics for the mind, the dumb bell and horizontal bar for the brain. You will try now won't you?

Billy: I'll do onnything to please Miss Wardley.

Polly: Now that is an awful start. It is neither one thing nor the other, and we will do without Miss Wardley, if you please.

Billy: Nay, that isn't fair doos. If I am to be Mr. Bunderley you will have to be Miss Wardley. Come which way has it to be?

Polly: It must all depend on time and place and the

company we are in. Again an exercise of judgment for you. There is no rule to cover every case.

Billy: And have I to be always on the watch to keep from making mistakes.

Polly: Yes, there is no royal road in this. Like cricket it is just hard practice. There is no other way.

Billy: I shall never do it, I know I cannot.

Polly: Now that is a bad start. You can do better than that. You must practice with the vicar, he will stare at first, but he will like it. And you must not keep company with your comrades.

Billy: What? nay that 'll be awful.

Polly: No not as bad as you think.

Billy: But all my pals talk the lingo, as you call it.

Polly: That is the reason you must give them up as a regular thing.

Billy: And what about t'games and t'doos that I have. Take to-morrow, there's a brassy match between Topping Cop, and Swing Jack, and I hold the stakes. I shall be forced to go, or my ten shillings will be up t'spout. That's in the forenoon at t'bacca time. And at night I'm laking Ike Hardy fro Whinorth a single wicket match for a supper. If I hedn't these bits o' doos I should be fast with mysen.

Polly: But you have me now.

Billy: Aye, that's—

Polly: Nay, but Mr. Bun-Billy, that was a long-drawn aye.

Billy: But what will mi mates think about me?

Polly: Do you think it matters so much?

Billy: Well, they are all I have. And they 'll laugh at me.

Polly: I have nothing to say about your mates. But it will not be the first time they have laughed at you, and you need not look at it from their point of view. You will have something else to do in the day time.

Billy: Aye well, but what about t'neets, that will be the worst.

Polly: What about me?

Billy: I had ferg—

Polly: Nay, not so bad as that. Billy don't you see, you had got into a vicious groove, with nothing really to do, but wait for these mates who could only spare you their bacca time and nights. And then, you know it's true, they've tried to make a hal of you.

Billy: But I like these bits o' doos. If I give them up I shall miss them terribly.

Polly: Well, you need not give them up, except in that you will not have time for them when you are a farmer.

Billy: But at night.

Polly: Nay Billy you have forgotten me again.

Billy: But you won't want me courting every night.

Polly: Yes and no, I should like to have your dear kind face before me every night, but there will be no time for me.

Billy: Oh, but if I gave me mates up, I might as well.

Polly: No, you will be too busy. You're education has been neglected, and the only time to improve it will be at night. Then, if I am to be your wife, I must improve myself. If you like we will read together some of the best books, history, travel, and poetry, so that our interests and tastes may grow in common, and wider than Bunderley village. Now don't pull such a long face. The village and all that is best among your chums will be there just the same, but you will have other interests, and better, if not quite as easy going and jolly.

Billy (Billy scratches his head as if puzzled): Oh I see it clear enough, and it's right, and what I ought to do, but I cannot say that I like it.

Polly: Oh but you will, for it will satisfy your conscience, if it does not please your old mates. And you will then really be a man, not only good-hearted, but capable of thinking and acting. But you are wearying of your blue stocking of a sweetheart, and wondering whether you have not made a bad choice, dear old boy. (Polly puts her arm around Billy's neck and kisses him.)

Billy. Nay no, but I was wonderin' if I could ever do anything that would make you proud of me.

Polly : Oh Billy. I would not change you for the cleverest man I ever saw ! Don't look so serious, I am proud of you now, and some day I shall be prouder still.

Billy : But what about t'brassy match, and the crocket match to-morrow ? Do you want me to throw them up ?

Polly : Not at all, they are all right. No, no, no, if we are agreed in what we have been talking about, all that will be changed will be that you will not have time for many such things in the future, except on holidays.

Billy : Oh yes I see, and you have no occasion to think that all my mates and their games will weigh much against my little sweetheart. But whatever in the world made you take to me, I have often wondered.

Polly : Because I could not bear to see you put upon. Ever since I was a little lass I have been surprised at the way folk got their fun. That those who reckoned to be smart and clever should get amusement by taking a rise, as we call it, out of the weak and simple always vexed me, but that seems to be the way of the practical joker. It is a cowardly way of getting fun. It was this feeling which made me take to you. I could not stop the joke, but I could pity and help the one put upon. And then I found what a treasure you were.

Billy : Me a treasure ? Nay Polly don't laugh at me. Why you have been finding nothing but fault with me all the night.

Polly : Billy, Billy, it is not what you are, but what you ought to be that troubles me.

Billy : Why you said I was like a piece of moorland, like a pup, a lamb or calf or rompin kittling, anything I guess that barely had the sense it was born with.

Polly : Oh those were only figures of speech. I can, I do love you as you are, but that only makes me long for you to be something more and better. It is my ambition to have you not just worthy of my love from the goodness of your heart, but

from the use you make of your life. Oh Billy if you will do as I wish we shall be as happy as the throstles in the wood. and our song like theirs will be full of joy and hope.

Billy: I think I see it all, but don't expect too much for fear that I fail.

Polly: Fail! you will not fail. But be prepared for taunts and jeers when you cease to be at the beck and call of these fellows, Tom and Joe and their mates. If we have faith in each other, we need not heed them. Let them look to their laurels, if they have any. You talk as if you were an old boot beyond repair, I know the sort in boots and men. Why you are like a parcel of new leather, out of which the cobbler can make things of beauty and use. (Billy looks wonderingly at Polly. She hugs and kisses him.)

Billy: I wonder if all courters go on as we do, so serious.

Polly: I guess they all wonder as we do. It is like entering a new world is courting, one that fancy has painted before hand with gaudy colours; colours I fear that often fade. But we will not let our fancy fade, and my fancy is that somehow, sometime, you will become worthy of the best Bunderley that ever lived and better than he.

Billy: Me, Polly, it's fearfully like talking nonsense.

Polly: That is just what folks say all courters do. But that is my dream, my fancy, and you are my knight in shining armour who goes forth to win the prize. And I will be your princess in the tower who watches your crest with fearful heart, but full of pride, as it rises and falls, and rises again in the battle.

Billy: But what will my mother say about all this?

Polly: Oh, Billy, you drag me back to earth again, my tower falls and I awake amidst the ruins. And again we are plodding slowly and wearily along a dusty road to nowhere. Your mother had her romance, and we will not be denied ours. (Polly shows signs of weeping.)

Billy: Forgive me Polly. I know, I see and understand a little of what you see and want. But I

thought you were so practical. Why, you fairly mothered me at the first when I fell in love with you.

Polly: Aye, and when was that?

Billy: When was that? It was when you were wiping the candle grease off my face under yon tree.

Polly: We can afford to laugh about that now.

Billy: I didn't laugh then.

Polly: I am afraid I did, at first.

Billy: Polly.

Polly: Oh you would have laughed, if you could have seen yourself.

Billy: I was a bonny sight, I know. And you laughed.

Polly: Inwardly at the first. Then I saw the cruelty of it all, and you know the rest.

Billy: I do that (he takes Polly in his arms). And I bless the day, with all its troubles, and shall do as long as I live. Eh' Polly, you cannot tell how happy I am! I will do ought or any way to please you.

Polly: That is like my own old Billy. Bobbie Burns says,

“The heart ay's the part ay
That makes us right or wrong.”

And he was right. But we will talk no more to-night of schemes for the future. Mine has been a strange love growth. Begun in a touch of pity, it has grown like a snowball, grown and grown, and now it seems too great for heart and soul, and I feel that I need a greater self to hold and give again as much as I get of this wondrous love.

Billy: Polly, I don't believe there is another like you in all the world.

Polly: No, and some folk would say, one of a sort is plenty. But who is this coming switching on? Well I never. This is either a very lucky or unlucky spot. Here is Ike Hardy off home to Whinorth. (Ike comes along, and Billy steps out to meet him.)

Ike: Hello folk! We meet once more.

Polly: Good time to-night.

Ike: Oh, well, I have a mile or two to go. I cahnt do my courting so near home as some folk. And then Ah'm in training to meet the Bunderley champion to-morn at t'neet. That's reyt, Billy?

Billy: Neht so mich champion Ah'm flay'd, an' a bit less i' twenty-four ahrs.

Ike: Aw well, that's as it happens. Ah hope we hev a good set to, not all on one side as it is so oft i' creetet.

Billy: So do I. If we hev' a good gamm' Ah sal be satisfied. Of course Ah sal win if Ah can.

Ike: T' same here, but Ah'd rayther loise to you ner onnybody.

Billy: Aye an' if Ah hev' to be bet, Ah'd sooiner you bet me ner onny o' t'lot. Ah's t'odds?

Ike: Rose wor saying she'd heeard ther' wor neht mich to booit between us. No odds onnyway. That shews we must be weel matched or they're poor judges.

Polly: Oh bother your gamms an' yer matches, when is t'wedding coming off? I heeard a whisper.

Ike: Nay don't ask me, yeh knaw weel eniff 'at Rose'll fix that up when sha wants it.

Polly: Wah then it'll neht be so long, I knaw.

Ike: You most likely knaw better ner I dew. But I mun be off. Good neet. (Ike goes off one side of the stage, Polly and Billy off the other side.)

(Curtain.)

'Act 3: Scene 2.

Time: Six months later.

Scene: Room in Mrs. Bunderley's house. Old-fashioned, with high mullioned windows; large open fire-place; on the walls pictures of hunting scenes, and portraits of one or two important-looking folks. Before the fire a very portly old lady (Mrs. Bunderley) is seated.

Mrs. B.: Ah wonder if Billy'll come? He wean't if he knaws what Ah want him for. He's grown varry stupid lattly; Ah'm flayd Ah'm bahn to hev bother wi' him. Bud Ah'm noan bahn to hev'

this little black-eed lass o' t'cobbler's comin an' snappin' Billy up if I can help it; neht I marry. Ah don't knaw hah it is, bud ivverybody seems to laugh at Billy an' me. Ah see nowt to laugh at. He happen duzzent promise to be like one o' them jockeys o' t' walls. Bud these is peaceful times, an' Ah nivver thowt o' Billy bein' a warrior. Ah fiind it's a gurt responsibility to train up one o' these aristocrats. Ther like some sorts o' dogs, ye've all 'at ivver yeh can dew to get 'em threw t'distemper, an' then if they grow up, ther to watch, er ther worryin' somedys cats er hens, an' geetin' inta mischief o' some mack. His father woddent dew owt to help to train Billy, so Ah hed it to dew, an' Ah'm sewer Ah did mi best. He wor all Ah hed, an' Ah cuddent bi letherin' him fro morn to neet. Ah did try it on one while, bud Ah'm sewer he gat sillier wi' it if owt. If his father heddent been sich a drucken 'un, he mud a streyten'd Billy up. Bud if he'd been one o' t'prahd sober sort, Ah expect he woddent ha' wed t'keeper's dowter. Nah Ah suddent ha' liked onnybody else to say that, bud they'll ha' thowt it monny a time I knaw. It 'ud ha' been better fer Billy if Ah'd sent him away to be trained, bud when his father deed, an' afore, we heddent mich to stir on. An' Ah wor so lonely. His side woddent touch mh wi' a long brush, an' my side woddent come near if Ah'd nowt for 'em. 'Ah nobbud hope it's true what t'last tutor said abaht Billy, 'at his sense wor slauh, bud it mud go on growin a long while. Bud it weant be mich use if he nobbud gets ripe when he's an owd man. He's all reyht here wi' me, an' he'll heli tons o' brass, nah, when owt happens t' Bart. But it's this weddin 'at Ah cahnt see threw. He's healthy an' strong, he's a rare gooid appetite, an' can sleep like a top. But he's noan fit to bi wed. An' awn mother 'at Ah am, Ah'm sewer noabdy 'll wed him fer owt bud his prospects. So Ah mun stop it, an' Ah will. Bud he's comin', Ah hear him. Come in wi' tha. (Enter

Billy.) Ah want a bit o' talk wi' the'. Sit the' dahn.

Billy: Whativver is ther, are yeh poorly?

Mrs. B.: Billy.

Billy: Mother.

Mrs. B.: Hez ta gotten agate o' courtin', Billy?

Billy: Who's tell'd yeh?

Mrs. B.: Nivver thee mind who's tell'd mh. Is it true?

Billy: Aye, well nah 'at yhe've plump'd mh wi't, Ah mud as we'll tack tult Ah expect.

Mrs. B.: Who is sha? an' what i' sha?

Billy: If Ah tell yeh, what then?

Mrs. B.: It all depends who sha is. Tha knaws who tha ar't.

Billy: Mother Ah knaw Ah'm a bit of a fooil, bud heng it all, Ah can see mi sen i' t'seemin' glass.

Mrs. B.: Billy, tha must ha' been asleep when tha wor born, an' Ah'm noan sewer tha'rt reyt wocken'd nah. Wah when owt happens thi uncle tha'll be a Sir, a Baronet.

Billy: Nay! Ah nivver saw nowt like ye, mother. Yer ollus meetin' trouble hauf way. He's all reyt is mi uncle. Ah saw him t'last week. He gav' me a whollop across t'shoulders wi' his whip, an' sang aht, "Hello Billy, woddent ta like to go huntin wi' us?" "Nou," Ah said, "Ah've no time. Ah've someat else to dew."

Mrs. B.: Ah knaw thi uncle's all reyt, bud he'll dee sometime.

Billy: Ah hope neht.

Mrs. B.: What tha hopes er duzzent hope 'll mack no difference. He'll dee an' then tha'll come inta his shoes, as ivverything falls to thee. Nah does ta see?

Billy: What?

Mrs. B. Yeh gurt gaumless tupheed. Hevent Ah tell'd the' hunderds o' times what a gurt family tha'rt sprung off?

Billy: Aye, an' hah badly thy've treated us.

Mrs. B. Nivver mind that nah. We've gotten t'maister on 'em, tha'll be a Baronet someday, tha cahnt help it if ta lives. An' tha wants to

wed some-dy fit to back the' up. - So who's this lass't tha'rt botherin wi'? Ah mun knaw.

Billy: Ah thowt ye said some'dy hed tell'd yeh.

Mrs. B.: Aye, an' Ah want to knaw all abaht it. Bud Ah can tell the' nah 'at it weant dew.

Billy: Well, if ye've made yer mind up it's no use me sayin' owt abaht it, an' Ah mud as weel go. (Billy gets up as if to go.) Hevn't Ah to go?

Mrs. B. Nou tha hezzent; tha'rt bahn wi' me when tha goes. Ah'd set it aht to see this lass mi sen, bud tha can go wi' mh an' see fair play, fer ther'll be a bit o' stryt talk, Ah can tell the'. Get thi hat an' come on, Ah can nobbud dew it when mi temper's up.

Billy: Mother, yeh've done as yeh liked wi' me all mi life, an' Ah don't want to mack yeh onny bother nah. Bud if some'dy's been tittle-tattlin' to yeh abaht me an' Polly, if yeh'll sit yeh dahn Ah'll tell yeh fro t'threed to t'needle all abaht it.

Mrs. B.: It'll mack nh difference, Ah knaw what lasses are better ner thee.

Billy: Ahtha-say ye dew, bud if yer bahn to stop t'job, yeh'll bi no wahr fer knawin' what yer stoppin'. Hev' yeh heeard abaht t' doo i' t' wood?

Mrs. B. Nou, what doo?

Billy: Wah it's a long tale. Yeh'll remember Ah wor lame; Ah gat it there. But afore then yeh don't knaw bud Ah hed a bit of a fancy fer Rose Gardiner.

Mrs. B. What another? Eh Billy!

Billy: Wait a bit. Ah hed, an' a Whinorth chap gat thick wi' her, wol shoo wor off at t'tide there. An' they gat agate o' courtin'. Ah woddent tack tult to onnybody, bud Ah felt bonny an' mad abaht it. An' one neet when two er three o' us young chaps wor i' t' village, this Ike Hardy, t'chap fro Whinorth, comm up wi' Rose an' we pitcher'd him. Bud this didn't stop him, fer he paid up like a man. As it happen'd we hed t'ale in i' Job Darby's joiner's shop. An' wol we wor suppin' it, Job tell'd us abaht some gurt forelder o' mine, 'at gat lost in a bog, at t'top o' t' moor, when he wor foloin' some Scotchmen 'at hed

stow'n his cattle. An' Job said 'at ivver sin' t'ghost o' this Sir Marmaduke, as he call'd him, hed haunt'd Bunderley wood. T'other two 'at wor there, wor Joe Egbert an' Tom Brisket.

Mrs. B.: What, t'butcher lad? He's an ill 'un, is Tom, an' so wor his father.

Billy: Ah can believe that. Well, they said 'at we mud gie this Whinorth chap sich a flay wi' a dummy boggard, 'at he woddent happen come after Rose agean. An Ah'll tack tult Ah wor ranty to stop him. So we agreed 'at Job sud mack a gurt fahl face like t'boggard's, an' at I sud put it on an'—

Mrs. B.: Billy! Billy! What a hal they've made the' intul. An' tha went intu t'wood to act t'ghost?

Billy: Ah did, an' Ah gat it rough, fer Ike worn't flay'd, an' ahstead o' ruunin' away, he comm at mh, an' as Ah'd no fend fer mi sen, dahn Ah went an' him o' t'top on mh, pundin into mi ribs. Ah don't knaw where Joe an' Tom wor, bud afore Ike could dew mich, Polly Wardley wor on to him an' pool'd him off, like magic.

Mrs. B.: Polly Wardley, what wor shoo dewin' there?

Billy: Ah'm bahn to tell yeh. Yeh knaw t' Wardley's cobbler's shop's t'next door bud one to Job's joiner's shop, an' Ah remembered at' t'after, we'd heeard somebody laughin' once er twice wol we wor there. It' hed been Polly, shoo'd seen t'leet an' wondered what ther wor up. An' shoo harken'd an' fun' aht. An' so shoo'd come dahn to t'wood to see t'doo.

Mrs. B.: Wah, shoo wor as bad as t'others, tha wor t'hal fer t'lot. An' thee to tack on wi' her after that!

Billy: Ah hev'nt finished. Shoo stopp'd Ike at onny-rate. An' shoo stuck to mh when Joe an' Tom comm up, an' it wor her 'at helped mh home.

Mrs. B.: An' it wor there where tha streynd thi enkle?

Billy: Nowhere else, an' hah Ah sud a gotten home if shoo heddent helped mh Ah don't knaw.

Mrs. B.: Bud tha'd nh 'casion to start courtin' her fer that.

Billy: Eh mother, yeh don't know what sort o' lass shoo is.

Mrs. B.: Ah know who shoo is an' what shoo is. Nah what'll thi uncle think when he gets to know? He's hed a lot to say abaht me, an' Ah've noan fergotten it nawther, if ivver he lets me finger him, Ah sal let him know what Ah think. Bud if Ah did let t'family dahn bi weddin' his brother nah at' tha'rt their heir Ah'm lewkin forrard to thee weddin' somedy fine an' grand.

Billy: Me wed a grand lady? Wah shoo'd laugh at us both. Lewk at mh,. Nay, mother. Some day ye'll change yer tune abaht Polly when yeh know all. Come nah, yeh weant go nah. An' Ah'm varry threng, ther's a lot a heifers comin' to t'farm to-day an Ah want to see 'em.

Mrs. B.: Nah then away wi' tha, bud no more courtin' wol we've hed another talk abaht it.

Billy: All reyt mother, Ah'm nivver in a hurry wi' owt. Ah've been browt up that way. (Exit Billy.)

Mrs. B.: Eh barn! Ah've done no gooid, he'll dew as he likes. They said his father nobbud hed one bit o' Bunderley in him, an' that wor 'at yeh couldn't sleat him, t'more yeh push'd him t'harder he went t'other way. So Ah moant stir up t'Bunderley i' Billy, er he'll go get wed, an' then all mi plans are done for. If Ah'd ivver hit it wi' t'uncle, Ah mud ha set him on to Billy, bud Ah know he fair hates to see mh, an' Ah'm sewer I hate him just t'same. Nou, Ah mun get hod o' this lass, an' shew her i' some way, 'at it woddent dew. Bud if sha can put up wi' Billy's gaumless way ther isn't mich chance. (A bell rings.) Theer ther's t'bell, an' Billy's noan here, an' he'll be reyt sarved if he hez to pine wol drinkin time. Bud Ah'll go, it's new'se me freatin' an' pinin' abaht Billy, ther'll be some way done. Ah'll see 'at ther's someat kept wahrm fer Billy. Poor Billy, he's varry like his father, Ah used to say he wor like a pig 'at 'll nobbud go t'way 'at yeh don't want it. (The bell rings again.) Comin'.

comin'. Eh my poor heead, it nivver wor so mich, bud it gets wahr muddled Ah think ivvery year, bud Ah's ettah dew summat. Aw, Ah knaw. Ah'll send a letter to t'lass, an' ax her to come an' see mh, it'll be better ner me goin' roitin' her aht at t'cobbler's shop. An' wol Ah'm abaht it Ah'll send fer t' Baronet. He'll happen noan come, bud Ah think he will if Ah tell him, 'at t'fate o' t'Bunderley's is at t'risk. Fer they tell me 'at he's lost nearly ivverything bud his pride. An' Billy threathenin' to wed t'cobbler's lass'll touch him. (The bell rings again.) All reyt I'm comin'. (Exit Mrs. B.)

(Curtain.)

Act 3 Scene 2.

The door of the Wardleys' cottage. Polly looking out. She looks up and down the street. Presently

Rose Gardiner comes along, she turns and stops.

Rose: Good mornin' Polly, tha lewks breet as a new pin. Is it true what Ah've been hearin'?

Polly: It all depends what tha's heard.

Rose: Wah, 'at Billy an' thee's courtin'.

Polly: An' if it is, what then?

Rose: Nay nowt; ivverybody's a reyt to please ther sen.

Polly. Aye if they get t'chonce, they cahnt if they don't get t'chonce. An' most on us hez to dew as wh can.

Rose: Ah've said nowt hev Ah? What's ta mean?

Polly: Nou, tha's said nowt, bud Ah knaw what tha'rt thinkin'.

Rose: Nowt reng Ah'm sewer.

Polly: Nou, bud nowt so varry nice fer me nawther. Tha thinks Ah've taan on wi' Billy, neht fer what he is, but fer what he hez.

Rose: Well!

Polly: Well, it's true, at least it wor a sort o' true once, bud it isn't nah. An' that macks mh so 'at Ah can afford to tell the' neht all, bud nearly all, hah its com abaht.

Rose: Ah don't want the' to think 'at Ah'm dahn

o'Billy, cos Ah didn't happen to fancy him, an' did fancy Ike.

Polly: Aw, it's no use Rose, they aren't there for us. We're all on t'lewk aht fer Gods i' t'shap o' men, bud we cahnt all hev 'em. Billy's,—well, Ah don't know what he is yet. Bud ye'll see if I get him. Men aren't like women, just a matter o' cloas an' stuffin' wi' a bit o' temper inside. Nou, men are different, they want hacklin'. An' a woman 'at's owt abaht her's t'creator to dew it. Mi father used to shew hens, an' Ah've seen him bring some bonny taistrils aht a' t'hen hoil, bud afore he'd done wi' 'em they wor fit to shew. Men are a bit like hens.

Rose: Wah, fowk 'll laugh at the', Polly.

Polly: Ahtha say, an' some 'll reckon to laugh, 'at 'ud ha been rare an' glad to get him. They'll pick it aht, when it's to latt what a jewel they've missed.

Rose: Bud reyt fair arta i' love wi' him?

Polly: Aye, nah, madly. Ah woddent swop him for onny other man i' England. Bud Ah cahn't say 'at Ah wor at t'first. It's a funny tale, Ah cahnt help laughin' mi sen, when Ah think of it. Of course tha knaws all abaht t'doo i' t' wood. Well just afore Ah'd fun aht 'at Ah sud ettah turn aht to sarvice. Mi father wi' his bit o' cobblin, an' rhumatic, couldn't keep a decent hahse together, so Ah wor on t'lewk aht fer a place, an' Ah'd heeard o' one at t' Lodge, t'hahse maid hed geen notice. An' Ah'd abaht made mi mind up to try fer t'shop. That varry neet t'boggard doo comm off, an' Ah tewk Billy home. Billy of course wor all blubber an' thenks, an' wilta shalta, wod ha' taan mh in to his mother. Bud Ah woddent an' comm away home. At t'after when Ah gat to mi sen Ah conn'd things ower, an' Ah comm to this, 'at if Ah wor bahn to go to t' Lodge Ah mud as weel go as t'mistriss as t'sarvant.

Rose: Bud what abaht t'owd dame Bunderley?

Polly: Aw, Ah thowt abaht that tew, an' Ah comm to

this, 'at if Ah hed to live wi' her at all, it 'ud be better to be on a level ner as t'understrapper. But it worn't that 'at decided mh. Tha knaws Joe Egbert, hez been reckonin' to come, off an' on, courtin' me ivver sin we wor at Sunday Skooil together. Ah don't knaw what he thowt abaht me, bud Ah nivver could fairly stomach him. Fer one thing he nivver seemed happy nobbud when he wor tackin' a rise aht o' summat er some'dy. An' sometimes it wor me. Well, i' this boggard doo, he'd hed a fairish hand, minnin Billy on, when he knew it 'ud mack a foil on him. Bud to mack a long tale short, that neet 'at Ah tewk Billy home, Ah felt what a shabby thing they'd done tul him, an' Ah said to missen, "Nah, wod Billy ha' done it to Joe er onnybody else?"

Rose: Aye, bud—

Polly: Wait a minit. Tha wor bahn to say, Billy heddent t'gumption in him to dew it.

Rose: Nay, Ah don't knaw 'at Ah wor, bud he worn't reckoned—

Polly: As cute as some. Nou, Ah knaw that, bud he wor ollus gooid-hearted.

Rose: Aye, when he hed owt, he'd ollus share it wi' t'others, bud tha knaws we called it soft.

Polly: Aye, Ah dew knaw, bud Ah've come to this, 'at Ah'd rayther bi baht so mich cuteness o' Joe sort. Ah knaw tha weant breathe a word er Ah suddent tell the'. Bud Ah've a plan o' mi awn o' mackin' Billy as sharp as I want him. His gooid natur Ah don't want to spoil, fer it 'll be all reyt when he gets to be rich.

Rose: Ah don't see hah tha'rt bahn to teych Billy to be cute.

Polly: Well bud I dew. T'Heygates farm's theirs, an' tenant's leavin'. Billy, to please me's started farmin'. An' they say he's noan a bad judge o' cattle, so Ah don't expect he'll dew so badly. Bud Ah dew knaw 'at fer a while he'll get his fingers trapp'd an' loise brass. It's that 'at'll wocken Billy up to lewk after his sen, an' then Ah want no more. If I can be

t'mistriss at t'Lodge, wi' a gooid-hearted husband, Ah think Ah's be as weel as livin' wi' Joe Egbert, wi' all his cuteness.

Rose: Bigum Polly, bud it's taan some reckonin' up. Ah'm sewer Billy wor ollus nice to me. So Ah don't see 'at it suddent work aht all reyt. Bud ther's his mother to face, tha'll hev her to reckon wi'.

Polly: Ah'm noan flay'd o' her, ner o' t' Baronet nawther. Ther' all i' t'past tense, as t'skoilmaister used to say. Wol Billy an' me 'll monopolise t'futer.

Rose: Aw well, Ah hope it 'll all turn aht reyt. Bud to mack owt aht ov a gurt spoiled barn, fer Billy wor nowt else, 'll tack the' all thi time. An' to think 'at all this sud spring aht o' t'boggard doo. It's reyt fair cappin'. Wah tha'll bi like Cinderella er Fatima, wi' slippers an fairey wark. An' Billy 'll be t'fairey Prince, ha! ha! er Blue Beard er some o' them chaps, all glitter an' glory. An' it weant be just Bunderley Lodge, bud Bunderley Hall, nah. Polly, Polly, are wh stood eh wer heead er wer feet? Are wh dreamin' er wakin'?

Polly: Ah'm noan dreamin', bud what duz to think abaht that? (Here Polly hands Rose a letter.) Ah gat that this mornin'.

Rose: (Rose hands the letter back.) Ah can mack nowt on't, Billy's mother's an aristocrat i' one way, fer Ah've heeard 'at they're duffin' writers.

Polly: Aw it isn't so bad. (Reads.) Dear Miss, I'm i' trouble about my son. You know who he is and what prospects he has, So I hope it isn't true that Billy and you are courting, but whether its true or not, I want you to come up to the Lodge to-morrow night about seven. I have sent for Billy's uncle. So ye know what to expect. I hope you will be a good lass, and come and tell us you don't want Billy.

Yours truly,

Nanny Bunderley.

Rose: Well, arta bahn?

Polly: Nay, what wod tha dew?

Rose: Well tha sees, they mayn't be so easy to manage as Billy. So Ah don't knaw what to say. T'owd lass'll bi t'warst. Tha'll heh less bother wi' t'Baronet. Bud if Billy's all reyt tha's no 'casion to go intut trap. Fer depend on't t'owd dame's hopin' to breck it off, shoo macks no bones abaht it i' her letter. Bud what duz Billy say, he knaws 'em?

Polly: Ah hev'n't axed Billy an' Ah'm noan bahn to dew. Nou, Ah could send a letter, bud Ah don't believe so mich i' letters, when yer so near, it's a bit like duffin'. Billy did say 'at his mother wor comin to see mh, so shoo's happen tapered her temper off wi' sendin' t'letter. Nou, Ah think Ah sal go, they cah'n't eyt me, an' I owe them nowt. Ah hevent sowt Billy, it's him, 'at sowt me, so Ah've nowt to fear, and Ah sahn't tack mich humbug fro nahther on 'em.

Rose: Wah, Ah don't think ther's owt varry terrabul abaht t'Baronet, when he's sober he's mild eniff, an' when he isn't he's t'same. So Ah sud go, an' if tha'll tack my advice, it'll be, don't waste time i' tryin' to convince t'owd dame, fer t'uncle's t'maister, go streyt fer him.

Polly: That's just what Ah set aht. Whativver they say, Ah cahnt see givin Billy up. Bud if t'road can be made smooth, it'll be t'best fer us all.

Rose: Reyt, that's reyt, but I'se ettah be off. Ah've a lot to dew an' Ike's comin' i' gooid time, an' we're bahn fer a walk threw t'wood.

Polly: Ther'll be no boggard this time, I'll see to that.
(Exit Rose.)

(Curtain.)

Act 3: Scene 3.

The drawing room in Bunderley Lodge. Mrs. Bunderley sat in a chair by the fire.

Mrs. B.: Eh, barn. Ah'm all ov a tremmel, whativver sal Ah mack o' this job? If Sir Lucas comes, him an' me's a long tale o' snarl an' hate to satle. Noan o' t'lot's ivver awn'd mh. Ah nivver even went to ther berrins. They nivver

ax'd mh. Just t' little bit to keep his brother an' me here, wor thrawn at us like thrawin' a bone at a dog. All they wanted o' us wor to hear 'at we wor deead. Ralph did his best to suit 'em, fer when whiskey woddent dew it, he tried brandy. It 'ud a suited 'em better if I'd done t'same. Eh, bud it's a poor doo when fowk are it t'gate, an' ther's lots beside me at that bat. Will he come? Ah ommost hope neht, fer we may hev sich a row, 'at Billy an' this lass may slip threw wer fingers. Bud Ah'm sewer Ah can mack nowt o' Billy bi missen. An' reyt fair, as bad as they've tret mh, Ah don't want t'owd family to go under. Ah know t' name an' land 'll be there, Billy's forholders lewked after that. What a pity they couldn't steym gumption eniff to pass on wi' t'title. Ah've ollos thowt hah mich better it 'ud be, if wise men could leave ther sense behint 'em, aye if they tewk ther brass wi' 'em. As oft as neht ther brass is a curse, bud ther sense 'ud nivver ha' been wasted. Bud it isn't so, an' freatin weant alter it. (A noise is heard outside, and a man's voice.)

Sir Lucas: Is this Mrs. Bunderley's room? Right! I'll go in. (Sir Lucas comes into the room. He walks up to Mrs. Bunderley.)

Sir Lucas: Mrs. Ralph, I suppose?

Mrs. B.: That's who it is Sir Lucas. Ah know ye. Yeh see gurt fowk get lewk'd up tul, wol one it t'crahd's nivver noticed. Weant yeh sit dahn? (Sir L. sits down opposite Mrs. Bunderley.)

Mrs. B.: Well nah Ah think Ah tell'd yeh i' mi letter what Ah wanted to see yeh abaht?

Sir L.: This son of yours, yes, yes, and his sweetheart. Well of course it is very important since my son died. I'm afraid I have neglected him, and you too Mrs. Ralph, but you know our old antipathies. I don't say we were right, but it is too late now to open the old sore.

Mr B.: Trew it is, bud Ah cahnt help just sayin' 'at Ah dew think wi' all yer hey noations, yeh mud ha fun a bit o' kindness i' yer heart i'all

these years sin Ralph deed, an' tried to mack mh feel a little bit less lonely.

Sir L.: True indeed. It sounds very bad, and is, but I hope I'm not as bad as it sounds, but I cannot get away from the fact that you are right. But one gets into a rut of friendship or otherwise. I never, I swear, had any personal feeling against you.

Mrs. B.: Twenty year an' more ye've let mh believe 'at Ah wor i' t'gate. Bud nivver mind, Ah've hed mi lad, an if he isn't as clever as some, he's to' mich heart to dew to onnybody livin' as ye've done to me.

Sir L.: I suppose I must forgive, or at least not resent your bitterness, and surely you don't think I have had any bad feeling towards you. And if you will pardon me I do not think we can serve our purpose so well, if you continue to stab me with your taunts.

Mrs. B.: Well, Ah ollus meant to tell yeh, an' this is t'first chonce Ah've hed. Bud nah 'at Ah've tell'd yeh, 'Ah don't want to keep on that string onny longer.

Sir L.: That's right, bury the hatchet. Now about your son. He is sweethearting one of the village girls, I think you said. Very well, you know, it's human nature.

Mrs. B.: That's what they said when Ralph comm courtin' me. Eh, Sir Lucas, t'world duzzent seem to alter mich. Bud nah's yer chonce. Yeh miss'd it wi' Ralph yer awn brother. Can ye an' me hit it wi' Billy, yahr nephew an' my lad?

Sir L.: Your wit and mine if they are well blended and wisely used should do it. You know how this country girl feels about marriage and a young man. I know how a man feels about a girl he's taken a fancy to.

Mrs. B.: Aye we knaw. An' we knaw tew 'at if we'd hed owd heeads on when we wor young, we sud had done things different. Bud that's no good at all.

Sir L.: Quite so, you're right. But what's to be done, let things slide, or act? Naturally I want the

family to keep up its dignity. Your son had no expectations, and has not been trained for the position. That cannot be helped now, so far as the past is concerned. But if he married some lady of good manners who would keep the position, and pass it on in well-trained children, that I take it is what we want.

Mrs. B.: Ye're a varry sensible gentleman, Sir Lucas. An' as ye'll see bi who shoo is, this lass aht o' t'village weant dew. Bud hah can wh stop it?

Sir L.: By putting another girl into this sweetheart's shoes. We must start another hare. What about the parson's daughters? Fine, buxom girls. If I wasn't a little too old I would marry one myself.

Mrs. B.: Ye'd better dew that, an' sattle t'job that way, fer Ah don't think Billy cares a button abaht bein' a Baronet.

Sir L.: No, no; I was joking. No, that's impossible. Your son's our only hope; and he should marry into a good family at all cost. A smart girl with an eye to the future would make a man of my nephew; and the salvation of the family would be assured. But this village girl. No, no, we must put a stop to it.

Mrs. B.: Bud hah?

Sir L.: I cannot tell you as easily as you can ask the question. You say you have asked her to come here and meet us. I don't know if that was wise, but if she is a wise girl she will see the absurdity of the whole thing, and then we can do something for her. Your son, otherwise than as my heir, is not what's called a catch.

Mrs. B.: Nah don't begin a-thrawin' Billy's failin's at meh; fer if yeh dew we'se differ directly.

Sir L.: I beg your pardon. I had no need to say that. I have come across him just a little myself. He is——; but I need not say anything, he is your son. How has he picked her up?

Mrs. B.: That's just it; he hezn't picked her up; shoo's picked him up.

Sir L.: Oh shocking. Why, she must be an impudent huzzy.

Mrs. B.: Nay, Ah don't think shoo's owt o' that sort. Ye hev'n't heeard abaht a doo ther wor lattly? Ah'm ashamed to tell on't. Ye'll knaw abaht Sir Marmaduke—hah he gat lost, an' t'boggard tale ther is?

Sir L.: Why yes. Those old things live somehow. But what has that to do with your son?

Mrs. B.: Nay nowt, nobbut he wor t'boggard.

Sir L.: Billy? I'm afraid I don't understand.

Mrs. B.: Well, Ah nobbut gat abaht hauf a tale fro' Billy; Ah expect he didn't want to tell mich, abaht a job where he'd been t'hal for t' others. It wor summat abaht a chap fro' Whinworth 'at hed come courtin' a lass i' Bunderley, an' some on 'em hed hatched up a plan to flay him away, an' they gat Billy to put a gurt false face on an' meet this courter an' his lass i' t'wood. Well, Billy hed a rough time; t'Whinworth chap worn't flay'd an' he upset t'boggard. Nah somehah, this Polly, t'shoemaker's lass, knew abaht t'doo, an' when Billy wor laid i' t'wood shoo wor there an' tewk up fer him, an' browt him home lame. Well, ye can guess t'other.

Sir L.: Oh yes, I see; the good Samaritan. And ever after Billy worships her. Your story does not make our task look very easy. You are his mother and have done a lot for him, and may make some fight with this heroine, but I don't see where I, the neglectful uncle, can have much influence. If Billy had had some ambition which I could help him to bring in sight, then I might have done something. Anyhow we are agreed, we shall both pull one way, and that helps.

Mrs. B.: Aw, Ah'm noan bahn to hev this young person tack Billy. Ah knaw ther'll be no rise fer me if Billy steps inta yar shoes, but fer Billy to be kept dahn wi' a low-lived common cobbler's dowter weant suit me, so Ah can tell yeh, an' Ah weant hev' it whativver comes er goes.

Sir L.: Is Billy about the house? We might have a talk with him before this girl comes. If she is half smart she will not come.

Mrs. B.: Aye, lets see what we can mack o' Billy. Ah'll tell yeh streyt Ah've made nowt on him up to nah. Bud Ah'll go fetch him. (Exit Mrs. B.)

Sir L.: And so Billy was the boggard! That's typical I fear of the condition to which the Bunderley's have fallen. Our latest representative is become the ghost or hobgoblin of the family. It looks like a final finish of the Bunderleys. The sadness of losing my son becomes darker now that there is really no one to take his place. And yet if Billy would only marry someone of good breeding, whose natural ability was trained so that on her side the dignity of the house would be maintained. But who would have him? Still that is our only hope. (Enter Mrs. B. and Billy.)

Mrs. B.: Nah then come in. Thi uncle 'll noan eyt the'.

Billy: Nou Ah know that. Bud if yeh both get a grab at mh, ther weant be mich left.

Mrs. B.: Billy, Billy! Here's thi uncle come to see us, to hev' a talk abaht family affairs. Talk ta him cahnt ta? Where's all thi skoilin flown tul?

Billy: How do you do uncle. I hear you want a little talk with me. I am at your service.

Sir L.: Thank you. It is as your mother says. You know how it has come about that you are so much more important now than your were, before my son's death.

Billy: I do not see how I am to blame.

Sir L.: No, no, but we think, your mother and myself, that in view of the change in your prospects, you ought to prepare to fill the situation you must come into.

Billy. Very well, you have been in the situation, what can I do to fit me to be your successor?

Mrs. B.: Nah Billy, it's newse the' talkin' fine like that, just wol the uncle's here. Wittah dew as the' uncle an' me wants the'?

Billy: What abaht Polly Wardley? Nou, Ah don't think Ah sal, bud Ah hevent heeard what yeh want yet.

Mrs. B. : Bud tha sooin can dew. It's abaht Polly, tha's guess'd, shoo weant dew for the' nah 'at tha'rt bahn to be a Baronet.

Billy (to Sir Lucas) : I hope that time is a long way off, uncle.

Sir L. : Oh yes, but still it is as your mother says, and you ought to be prepared beforehand. What is there about this girl, or young lady I suppose you would prefer to have her called? It is a little flirtation, that's all?

Billy : More than that.

Sir L. : You are not engaged?

Billy : That is something like the condition of the affair.

Mrs. B. : Billy, Billy! Ah wish tha woddent talk to thi uncle like a parson. Where hez ta picked this talk up? An' what's come o' t'other?

Billy : Aw (touching his forehead), t'other's here all reyt. But Polly, or Miss Wardley, as I call her to strangers, an' me's dewin' wer courtin' neht i' Bunderley lingo, but i' gooid plain English.

Mrs. B. : Aw dear, when tha'rt goin' on wi' thi fancy talk, tha macks mh feel 'at Ah've lost t'end of the'. Bud sewerlee if thi uncle an' me says tha moant go onny farther wi' this lass, tha'll dew as we tell the'.

Billy : Mother, Ah've done as yeh tell'd mh a long while, don't yeh think it's time Ah did a bit as Ah lik'd?

Sir L. : Look here nephew, you are my heir, and will be the master at the Hall, probably before many years. There needs a mistress as well as a master. This village girl is all right in her way, and your mother and I have nothing to say against her. But you must see that she is not fitted to be mistress there.

Billy. Uncle, you don't know how clever she is, she is so clever that she makes me, silly as I am, feel quite smart when we have been together a while.

Sir L. : Who is she?

Billy : Polly, Miss Wardley, is the daughter of the shoemaker in the village.

Sir L. What? Tom Wardley's daughter. I remember Tom, he used to wicket-keep for Bunderley eleven. Oh Tom's all right in his place. I once gave him a fine black eye when I was bowling for the team. We don't mind you taking an interest in this girl and her father, as I hear she was very kind to you, when you were masquerading in the wood. We can do something to help them, too, though if I am not mistaken, Tom's an independent sort of chap, great at radical meetings, and very scornful of what he calls the upper ten. We will do anything in reason for the girl, but you really must give up the idea of marrying her.

Billy: Do you know how old I am? I am twenty-three.

Sir L.: Still there is no great need for haste about your marriage, in fact twenty-three is, if anything, too young. I have been thinking while I have been talking to you, that you might come with me next week. I am going on the Continent. Travel and mixing with cultivated people gives you knowledge and assurance.

Mrs. B.: Nah, tha hears what thi uncle says, it weant dew at all, an' we're noan bahn to hev' it.

Billy: Nay mother, what abaht t'keeper's dowter, shoo didn't stop to please other fowk, when shoo'd a chance fro one aboon her.

Mrs. B.: Nah that licks all! Billy, Ah've nivver done owt er said owt, bud Ah've thowt as to hah it 'ud lift the' up, er hod the' dahn. An' nah when tha's a chance o' bein' summat an' somebody, tha frames an' seems to want to tee a clog to the' feet. Bud Ah've telled the' Ah weant hev it, so there!

Sir L.: Mrs. Ralph, perhaps we are judging too hurriedly. This Miss Wardley may be quite a different kind of lady from what we are picturing in our minds.

Billy: I am sure she is.

Mrs. B.: Billy, shoo seems to helh fair mesmerised thee, bud let me finger her, an' then we'se see

what shoo's up tul. Shoo duz all t' courtin'
Ah expect, an' tha'rt flay'd on her.

Billy: Ah like ta please her, Ah'll tack tult, bud
t'courtin' isn't as ye say.

Sir L.: Will you come with me next week? You shall
see some real ladies.

Billy: I will see what Polly thinks.

Mrs. B.: Tha knaws what they've said abaht the' all
along Billy. They said tha wor teed to my
apron string, bud they didn't knaw hauf hah
simple tha wor. Just to think o' lettin' a lass
domineer ower the'. Wah tha mud nivver ha
cутten thi wisdom teeth, to hear the' talk.

Billy: Ah'm neht so sewer 'at Ah hev. Bud what
de yeh want mh to dew mother? and what do
you uncle?

Mrs. B.: We want the' to say 'at tha'll dew as we
want the'.

Sir L.: No, no, not exactly that. (To Billy.) We
want you to consider your altered position, and
act up to it.

Billy: I have done that.

Mrs. B.: An' what ta bahn to dew?

Sir L.: Just one moment Mrs. Ralph, we may be un-
fair in our remarks and judgment. We are
hardly giving the young lady a chance.

Mrs. B.: Aw, shoo's a forrard un, yeh can hear that
bi what Billy says. Ah don't want to see her.

Sir L.: But I do, and as it was that you asked me to
come here for, I am reserving my judgment
until I see her. We cannot treat a young lady
worse than a tramp in the dock. Let's have
the other side. Is she here?

Billy: She was, when I came into the room.

Sir L.: Come now Mrs. Ralph, you must put on one
side your opinion, and form one worse or better
from what you hear and see. (To Billy): Will
you ask Miss Wardley to step this way? (Exit
Billy.)

Sir L.: Will you speak to the lady or shall I?

Mrs. B.: Nay, fro' t'way sha seems to hev maistered
Billy, it'll tack both on us.

Sir L.: Very well. I only thought that you might

understand her better than I should. I haven't mixed much in the life of the village since I was a young man.

Mrs. B.: Aw shoo'll noan bother mich wi' me. Yeh'll see shoo'll want to convert ye.

Sir L.: No easy matter that, I can assure you. But I want to give fair play. I hear them coming. (Enter Billy and Miss Wardley. Sir Lucas rises, and Billy clumsily introduces Polly to his mother, and then to Sir Lucas, who conducts her to a chair.)

Sir L. (to Billy): Perhaps, I don't know, but it might be embarrassing to Miss Wardley for you to stay. But of course you can do as you like.

Billy (to Polly): Shall I stay?

Polly: No, Sir Lucas is right. You may return presently. (Exit Billy.)

Sir L. (Rather staggered, tries to start the conversation on the level he had expected from a village girl.): What a likely young fellow Billy has grown.

Polly: I beg your pardon, Sir Lucas, but Billy Bunderley I hope has disappeared; he no longer exists in the life of the village. Mr. William Bunderley has taken his place. I hope you will forgive the interruption.

Sir L. (aside): My stars! But this is a transformation. (To Polly.) Half a moment; let me see, how is it? Where do we stand?

Polly: Sir Lucas?

Sir L.: Just one moment. You and Billy?

Polly: William now.

Sir L.: Yes, of course; now I have it. I see what you are up to.

Polly: Oh please don't put it that way. This is quite a serious business for you (to Sir Lucas) and you (to Mrs. Bunderley), as well as William and myself. May I say now for us both, how very sorry we were to hear of your great loss. We hoped to the last that your son would be spared, and I am sure you will believe me, when I tell you that the blow in many ways was very great to your nephew. You know his up-

bringing and the result, easy-going and purposeless. I may tell you now that some time ago we had arranged that this life should end, and that as a farmer William should put himself into the ranks of men whose lives are of some use.

Sir L.: Yes, yes, that's all right, but as you are aware, the death of my son makes a difference in the prospects of my nephew, and in his duties.

Polly: Oh yes, I am coming to that. We have had many anxious talks about the change. Personally, I am very sorry, because William without more experience of the world can scarcely hope to fill the position with much dignity. But it is not our or his choice, and we can only bow to the fact.

Sir L.: Miss Wardley, you are aware of the reason why Mrs. Bunderley asked you to come to-day.

Polly: Quite. I have to thank Mrs. Bunderley for telling me in her note.

Sir L.: Of course you have no experience of the life a Baronet lives.

Polly: No, that is so, except from the radical papers my father takes, but I hope they are biassed, otherwise Baronets are a bad lot.

Sir L.: That's not exactly what I meant.

Polly: Oh, perhaps you were referring to what an ideal Baronet should be.

Sir L.: No, scarcely that, though to have an ideal is useful. But we were thinking Mrs. Bunderley and I, to be quite frank, that your training could hardly fit you for the position of a Baronet's wife.

Mrs. B.: That's it, if Billy's to be a baronet, he owt to hev a reyt lady fer his wife.

Polly: We are quite agreed.

Mrs. B.: Varry well, then ye'll give Billy up. An' varry sensible on yeh it is Ah'm sewer. Nah, what can wh dew for yeh fer missin' Billy?

Polly: Mother!

Mrs. B.: Don't mother me, Ah weant hev' it. Yeh weant give him up. Well Ah think it's cheeky to think o' runnin' away wi' t'heir to a Baronet.

Polly: Ah'm noan bahn to differ wi' yeh mother. Ah beg yer pardon. Bud yeh didn't ollus think so. Once ov a day somebody mud o' said t'same to ye.

Mrs. B.: That's nowt to dew wi' it. Hez it Sir Lucas? He's my lad an' Ah weant hev' it, so that ends it. An' don't mother mh, Ah tell yeh again.

Sir L.: If you appeal to me Mrs. Bunderley, you must give me a chance. You must not fly off like that. Your way of settling the question every time you speak, I fear, is open to the old objection that two negatives make an affirmative. Billy—I beg your pardon (to Polly), William, boy or youth or young man, or whatever we choose to call him, must, I take it, have a final choice in this matter. (To Mrs. Bunderley.) Whatever influence you have you must use it with him. This young lady, I'm sure, has no desire to stand in the way of your using your motherly influence.

Mrs. B.: Nay, Sir Lucas.

Sir L.: I beg your pardon.

Mrs. B.: It's no use, Ah see ye're givin' in.

Sir L.: Mrs. Ralph, you are jumping to a conclusion again. I never said a word to lead you to think so.

Mrs. B.: Nou, Ah knaw that. It isn't what yeh say, it's hah yeh lewk, an' hah yeh sahd. Yeh aren't his mother, an' yeh cahnt feel wi' me. Here shoo (pointing to Polly) as gooid as dings mh up, wi' dewin' what Ah weant let her dew, an' nawther on yeh seems to see 'at it's just what Ah knaw abaht t'bother 'at 'ud follo' 'at macks mh so mich agean Billy weddin' her. Shoo's sharp eniff, sadly to' sharp fer my fancy.

Sir L.: Oh stop, do stop. If I know anything of Bunderley manners and customs, you are on the high road to a ding dong row. And if that's all I'm off. (He rises.)

Polly: Oh I do hope you won't go, Sir Lucas, I beg of you to stay and bear with Mrs. Bunderley; according to her experience she says exactly what one would expect.

Mrs. B.: Young woman, Ah want noan o' yahr pity. A keeper's as gooid as a cobbler at onnyrate. An' if Ah nivver hed mich skoilin, Ah've liv'd a long while i' t'world, an' it's time an' experience neht skoilin' 'at teyches yeh what men an' women are. So there.

Polly: Oh do sit down (to Sir Lucas). I promise you the quarrel, if there is one, shall be all on one side. (Then to Mrs. B.) Mrs. Bunderley, if yeh weant let mh call yeh mother. Ah want to ax yeh just a question er two. Suppose some neet when yahr husband wor courtin ye, an' lewk'd intah yer een as if he'd nivver seen owt so grand afore, an' then seized yeh in his arms as if hee'd crush yeh to deeach, an' kuss'd yeh as if he'd nivver stop; suppose 'at somebody hed come an' said, "Young woman, yeh owt to hev' more respect fer this gentleman's father an' mother, an' relations, ner let him worship yeh an' love yeh like this," what wod yeh ha' said?

Mrs. B.: Aw Ah sud varry likely ha' tell'd 'em to mind ther awn business. But that's nowt to dew wi't. I've seen t'folly on't. An' beside, Ah'm neht sich a fool, 'at Ah cahnt see 'at it'll be farewell Billy an' come aht Polly, like t'Jacky an' Jinny weather glass. It 'll nivver rain no more. T'Bunderley name 'll be there, bud it'll be t'cobblers pullet 'at'll dew all t'crawin' if ther is onny. An' if Bunderley hez to be rewld bi a woman, Ah'll tell yeh to yer face, Ah'd rayther see it rewld fro aboon ner below. Ah'm nobbud a silly owd woman, an' Ah've paid fer t' pride o' bein' wed to a Bunderley, bi t'neglect an' t'scorn o' them Ah'm standin' up for nah. Ah'm agean it, an' nowt 'll alter mh nah.

Polly: Ah've promised Sir Lucas neht to differ wi' mi mother-i'-law.

Mrs. B.: Nah Ah weant hev' it.

Polly: Well then, Ah've just another question. Suppose when yahr—

Mrs. B.: Ah don't want him rakin' up.

Polly: Bud Ah say suppose when he hed sattled it all wi' ye, an' ye'd agreed to be wed, his mother an' relations hed come an' tell'd yeh to give him up, woddent yeh ha' said 'at ye an' him 'ud dew as yeh liked?

Mrs. B.: Varry likely Ah sud, bud hevent Ah tell'd yeh 'at Ah've seen intult, an' 'at it weant dew. An' Ah weant hev it at no price.

Polly: Sir Lucas, may I appeal to you. Mrs. Bunderley has said her say, and given her verdict. It is against me. Now I am sure you would say I was wanting in spirit if I had accepted such a judgment. If for nothing else, I feel now that to win and hold your esteem I must fight this matter out. I have another proposal, and it is that your nephew be called in, and if you like I will retire, while you do all you can to get him to renounce me.

Sir L.: That sounds fair Mrs. Ralph, what do you say?

Mrs. B.: Fair, hah can it be fair, when sha's witched him? If ye'd nobbud tell her as Ah hev', 'at yeh weant stand it, then it 'ud end it.

Polly: We hevent gotten as far as that yet. It may come tult i' t'end, bud wol then it's what Sir Lucas would call "sub judice."

Mrs. B. (to Sir L.): Didn't Ah tell yeh 'at shoo'd go for ye? Ah can see 'at Ah'm nobody i' this job, an' me his mother. Bud Ah weant hev' it, an' Ah' stick to that. Shoo sahint heh Billy, it duzzent matter hah fine sha talks.

Sir L.: If our interview is to serve any purpose, we must be frank and to the point. Mrs. Ralph and I had agreed before you came that at all cost you and my nephew could not marry. I must own that you are either playing a part, or you are not the lady I expected to meet. I thought you were just one of the village girls.

Polly: So I am, my father is the village shoemaker.

Sir L.: So I understand, but how comes it that you speak to me with such assurance and knowledge, and in fitting language?

Polly: As to my speech, the schoolmaster always praised and help'd me because I took such an

interest in grammar, and I kept it up by reading to my father the speeches of John Bright and Richard Cobden. In the village I speak the language of the street. As for my knowledge, well I have used my eyes and ears, and been silent and practised thinking. But you want further frankness? Very well. Your nephew and I were thrown together. My befriending him no doubt appealed to his good nature, and he seemed to become very fond of me. We have all, I suppose, our ambition or dreams. I own that I had some ambition, and I saw that in your nephew there was the making of a kind companion for life. And yet in the raw as I found him, he did not suit me any more than he did you. I saw that he had a good heart, with a rather—yes I will say it—dull mind. But under the influence of love for me, I found he could revive much of the education which before time seemed to have been wasted on him. You have seen him, and I know from your manner as you speak that you are aggreably surprised with him. For one of my sex I am not sentimental, but I feel that it is love that has transformed your nephew, and my love for him has so grown that I am ready to make sacrifices if they are needed. And now if you still think that I ought to give him up, and if you can convince him of that, I will go back to my old life, which I have only left in imagination, and you can have your wish.

Sir L.: Indeed Miss Wardley, I have repeated more than once, that in this business I want to be fair. And Mrs. Ralph only wishes the best for her son, which is natural.

Mrs. B.: Aye, an' Ah knaw 'at weddin' a lass aht o' their awn lot tacks some gettin' ower. Ah've hed it thravn at mh all mi life. An' Ralph did more drinkin' ner he wod 'a done, if he'd been tret reynt bi his awn fowk. Ah knaw; fer Ah've bidden it: an' Ah cahnt ferget it. Nou, it weant dew Ah tell yeh. Shoo's tackin' yeh in Sir Lucas, Ah can see that, bud her knackin an' frappin duzzent turn me.

Sir L.: But we must have something more than a simple "no" for your son. Remember it rests with him to decide.

Mrs. B.: Wah then he'll dew as Ah tell him. Let him come in an' we'll sooin sattle t'job, if shoo hezzent witched him.

Polly: Shall I ask him to come in? This is growing painful for me.

Mrs. B.: Nay, Ah'll ax him misen. (Exit Mrs. B.)

Mrs. B.: Nah then he's here, will yeh put it tul him? Bud remember Ah'm agean it.

Sir L.: Well nephew, this is an odd way of doing things. But perhaps we are a special breed, that, may be, is the reason. When I was your age if anybody had said "Look here what about your sweetheart" in any way at all, I should have said, "Mind your own business." And yet here I came, and with your mother, we hold a court to try your case. We put you through as a witness and your sweetheart as well, and give you every chance to make a fool of yourselves. Because I suppose we thought you a couple of fools. And now we are going to the other extreme and parodying justice by following the unusual course of letting the prisoner decide his own case. Are you still wishful to marry Miss Wardley?

Polly (to Sir L.): One moment, I must be quite fair to myself, if you are too kind to be so to the case, as you call it. (To Billy.) Any vow or proposal you ever made to me, vow of love or wish to marry me, you can consider as withdrawn and ended. And more, I tell you now; that if you marry me you will make difficulties for yourself, which would be avoided if you married one in your own station. And there is no doubt that you have a duty to Sir Lucas and your mother, to rise to the dignity of your position as heir to a great name.

Mrs. B.: Nah Billy, shoo's geen the' a chance, act like a man fer once.

Billy: That's what Ah mean to dew mother. Ye've allus done yer best for mh as far as yeh knew

hah, an' Ah'm sewer Ah don't want to hurt yer feelings. Ah hevent been nich credit to yeh up to nah. An' it feels a poor doo; 'at nah when Ah'm favered be fortun' an' ye could be prahd o' mi prospects if neht o' me, 'at Ah cahnt dew as yeh want mh. What hev yeh agen Polly. Nowt Ah'm sewer. Ah don't know what shoo's said bud Ah know what sha's done. Fro t'time sha fan me actin' t'boggard i' t'wood, shoo's been like a angel to me. Shoo fan mh a gurt silly lad, an' shoo's goan a long way towards mackin' a man on mh. An' so Mother Ah couldent dew as yeh want mh. (To Sir Lucas.) And now uncle I hope you will live so long that you will forget the court you held at Bunderley Lodge to-day. And if some day I have to take your place I trust I may be more fitted for it than I am now. But whativver I may fail in, I promise you, that the lady who is my wife, shall be as sweet and fair and dignified, as any that ever stepped over the threshold of Bunderley Hall. There she stands.

Sir L. : You are only just in time Billy, for egad if you had failed. I would have done my best to make her mistress of Bunderley myself.

Sir L. : (Sir Lucas turns to Mrs. Bunderley, who seems puzzled): Now Mrs. Ralph we should be quite a happy family, if you could see your way to relent. You put up a brave fight for the family, when I easily fell before the enchantment of this woodland fairy. Come now! all that is needed, is your maternal blessing. I have only played a Baalam's part, and must seem to you a dismal failure, and I want to do something in this settlement. And I shall be pleased if you will let me have the credit of winning your favour to this union.

Mrs. B. : Eh, Sir Lucas; if yer a-baronet ye're nobbud a man when all's said an' done. Ah warn'd yeh fro t'first what 'ud happen, an' Ah'm sewer yeh cahn't blame me if it turns aht a failure. An' nah yeh may be capt, after what Ah've said, bud rey't fair i' t'boddem Ah see nowt agean it at all.

Ah've been feytin' fer t'family, neht misen. An' nah at ye've thrawn t'sponge up, Ah'll dew t'same. An' after all what duz t'family want bud somedy wi' some gumption an' go abaht 'em. An' Billy (To Polly) Ye'll let mh call him Billy sometimes? (To Billy) Ah don't see where tha could ha fun a better ner Polly if tha'd sowl ivver so. An' nah Miss Wardley—

Polly: Nay let it be Polly.

Mrs. B.: Well aye, Polly then. Ye'll ettah fergie t'owd woman. An' someday if yeh happen to be i' t'same box yersen, ye'll knaw 'at it's noan so easy to thoil loisin one 'at ye've browt up as Ah hev Billy. There it is agean; Ah say yeh'll feel it. It duzzent matter hah bonny er clever t'robber may be 'at's running' off wi' him.

Polly: Really mother; Ah can call yeh mother nah, Ah've nowt to forgive. An' nah its owerd Ah can tell yeh Ah woddent ha' miss'd this feyt fer Billy, fer Ah cahnt tell what. (To Mrs. Bunderley) Come give us a cuss, Billy's too shy. (Polly kisses Mrs. Bunderley.)

Curtain

T' ROADMEN.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

ABE SHARP The Roadman.
JONAS BOLTON The Roadman's Assistant.
SYDNEY THOMPSON A Stone Mason.
TOM PROCTOR ... Tailor, and Local Board Man
MOLLY PERCH A Mill Girl.
SALLY BAKER ... A Mill Girl, later Mrs. Thompson.
and
Mrs. Thompson's Child.

Act 1. Scene 1. Period. 70 years ago.

A country road with grass growing alongside, and here and there heaps of stones ready for road mending. Two men seated on a stile, from which a path passes through an adjoining wood. One is an old man, grey and bent with years and his toil on the road. The other man is young, but stunted in height and lame. They are having their mid-day meal. After getting part way through the meal, and having a good drink out of a large bottle, the old man turns to the young one and says:—

Abe Sharp: An' so tha's come to work o' t'road.
What duz to say tha's done afore?

Jonas Bolton: Aw Ah've nivver hed a regler job, Ah work'd t'longest fer t'parson, bud he gav'mh varry little er owt bud advice, an' yeh knaw Ah couldn't live o' that. Wi' bein' lame, yeh see, Ah cahnt dew as mich as most, Ah cahnt get off t'spot so fast. Ah couddent get owt else.

Abe Sharp: Nou; Ah see (a short pause) Hah owd are ta?

Jonas Bolton: Twenty-three.

Abe Sharp: That's bad.

J. Bolton: Hah?

Abe Sharp: Well, Ah wor aboon sixty afore Ah tewk tult. An' Ah didn't come to please misen then. It wor it er t'warkhahse. Lucky mi barns hed gotten up so as they could fend fer ther sen. What are they bahn to gi' the'?

J. Bolton: Nine shillin'.

Abe Sharp: What, an'finnd thi awn tooils?

J. Bolton: Aye, bud they said Ah could hev an' owd hack and shool 'at belenged to him 'at deed. What do the' gie ye?

Abe Sharp: Ehleven shillin'. (They now sit for a few minutes before either speaks; then the old man as if at the end of some train of thought says)

Tha duzzent ail owt 'at tha knaws on, nobbud lame of a leg?

J. Bolton: Nou, what for?

Abe Sharp: Nay nowt; Ah' wor nobbud thinkin' it's a long while, just to hing on bi t'skin o' thi teeth, is fifty year, an' if owt happens nowt bud t'warkhahse i' t'end, by God its a prospect!

J. Bolton: Well what could Ah dew? If Ah get a chance, Ah sal mend mi sen.

Abe Sharp (cheerily): Aye an' Ah hope thah will. (To himself). Ah wish Ah'd said nowt, bud Ah could'nt help. (Then with an assumed air of brightness) Aw ther's nivver nh tellin'. It issent ivverybody 'at gets ther nose to t'grunstun 'at's fore'd to stop there. Tha'rt young. Tha's thi wits abaht the'. (In a sadder tone gradually brightening.) Ah'm neht sewer 'at that's a bles-sin' bud it may be; of course it must be, it is sometimes; Ah've knawn it both ways.

J. Bolton: Ye've stuck to t'road a fairish while. Is it a nice job?

Abe Sharp: Well, it is, an' it is'nt. It hez gooid points, an it hez bad uns. To begin wi' t'wage weant hardly keep body an' soul together, neht to mention cloas; bud what ther is is regler. Then, ivvery one 'at pays a fewh shilling i' rates, thinks he's a rey to humbug t'roadmender. An' they don't agree a bit i' the'r noations o' hah things sud bi done. If one on 'em sees the' cowlin' t'much off, he grummels an' says, "T'muck saves t'stones," an' Ah owt to leave it on. Another wonders hah Ah can fer shame to let t'sludge stop o' t'road, churning t'road up, an' rottin' it i' bits. Then one says t'stones is'nt brocken little eniff, an' weant set. Another says ther to small, an' wear away to mush i' no time. Bud t'warst of all is him 'at pays t'wage. Bud tha'll finnd it aht sooin eniff. Ther is better ameng 'em, Ah've knawn odd uns, bud tack my word for it, if tha finnds an' idle-back 'at's gotten one o' these soft jobs: an' ther nearly all that sort; he's a bad boddem'd un, an' macks it hut for ivverybody 'at's fore'd to be under him.

Then tha sams up t'rhumatic an'all t'other bone warkin ailments there is, an'what tha sams up tha sticks tull.

Them's some o' t'bad points, Ah've tell'd the' 'em t'first, so as tha mh ferget 'em, wi' thinkin o' t'good uns.

First of all, Ah can promise the' one thing. Tha'll nivver bi short o' appetite. Ah think if ther's one pool 'at t'poor hez ower t'rich its that, though varry likely t'reason he's sich a good appetite fer one meal is, 'at he hed to' little at t'meal afore. Bud whativver's t'reason, tha hez t'appetite.

Then tha gets to see summat. When Ah wor weyvin, Ah did as Ah lik'd, Ah knaw, an' knock'd abaht a bit more ner them 'at's teed up i' t'miln, bud at mi wark it wor mich of a michness ivvery minit o' mi time. Bud here on t'road ther's summat fresh ivvery tothre minits, horses an' carts an' weggans an' men, pass like a shew. Tha sees owd friends an' new friends an' strangers, an' t'beauty on it is 'at they pass. Ther's t'grumblers 'at Ah've telled the' abaht, bud if tha'rt hauf sharp tha gets t'most fun aht o' them. Ah can tell 'em nah afore they speyk. Ther's t'little stone grummler an' t'gurt stone grummler, t'muck on grummler an' t'muck off grummler. Tha'll finn'd aht hah to spot 'em i' time, an' then tha'll begin to enjoy workin' o' t'road.

J. Bolton: An' yeh get all this fer nowt, thrawn in wi' t'wark. It'll be a bit more exciting ner working fer t'parson onnyway. Ther's nivver nowt there wol Setterda', then its a bit lively, if he hezent gotten his sarmon ready. T'parsons wife's a tongue in her heead, an' if he's behint hand, sho macks him frame on. T'fowk get their talkin' to' o' Sunday at t'Church, bud he gets his t'day afore. Ah'd nowt to dew wi' it, bud Ah couldn't help hearing 'em. They tewk me to be reng i' mi heead Ah expect. "My dear Sylvia." He ollus began that way, bud Sam Jarman, When they turn him aht o' t'Blue Lion, cahnt swear

hauf as bitter as t'parson an' his wife dew at one another. Her wi' her "James love," an' him wi' his "My dear Sylvia," Ah fair sham'd to hear 'em silly as Ah am.

Abe Sharp: Aw, they see to mich o' one another duz sich as parsons an' ther wives. Tha sees its this road. He knaws 'at shoo knaws, an' shoo knaws 'at he knaws, where t' angil ends an' t'divul begins in 'em. An' its maddenin' to knaw 'at its newse prehtendin to some'dy 'at knaws better. Ah used to be a bit t'same when Ah liv'd an' wayve at home. That's one thing Ah like t'road for. An' ahr Nancy said shoo lik'd mh aht o' her gate, so it fit both roads, and suited us both.

J. Bolton: An' yeh like t'job then?

Abe Sharp: Aw its all reyt, if ther wor owt for't. I' winter its a bit dowley. Bud sometimes then t'frost comes, an' duz us wer wark for us fer weeks together. Reyt eniff when it brecks we've all t'wotter on to keep things onny bit like.

But its i'spring when t'real enjoyment begins. Evvery thing's on t'moove, t'fields an' t'woods are just doncin wi' life. T'birds one after another begin singin' an' matin' an' then afore owts long, t'young uns come chirripin' rahnd, an' somehah Ah believe they all knaw 'at ah'm fond on 'em, fer they nivver seem flayd o' me, an' t'best on't is we nivver fall aht. Ah hev' mi troubles in a way, sometimes happen a gurt wind, er t'leetnin' 'll come, crewil an' divulish, an' dahns one o' mi best friends. Nobbud last week that storm 'at ther wor, fell'd yon gurt oak tree, where Ah ollus used to get mi meals. Ah wish they'd get it away, fer it macks mh poorly ivvery time Ah pass it. Eh, t' times at Ah've sitten under it, an' heeard t' wind singin' an' sooin' an' moanin' aboon mh, an' fair felt 'at it wor sayin' summat th mh, bud Ah could'nt tell what, an' nah its goan. Ah've peark'd here an' gotten mi bite an' sup, sin' it fell, bud Ah don't feel reyt at home.

J. Bolton: Ye'll bi my maister nah, weant yeh. Ah's ettah dew as ye say?

- Abe Sharp: Aw, Ah dont knaw. Ther'll neht bi mich maisterin if I hev' it to dew, tha's nh cashun to bi flayed o' that.
- J. Bolton: Ah'm sewer Ah hev'nt, bud ye'll tell mh what to dew, an' Ah'll dew it if Ah can.
- Abe Sharpe: Aw aye, tha'rt welcome to owt Ah knaw, it is'nt mich, bud reyt eniff it is'nt onny fooil 'at knaws what to dew on a road.
- J. Bolton: Nou, thats it. (A bell is heard in the distance.) What's that, t'Syke Mill bell ringin' t'nooninin' ahr aht?
- Abe Sharp: Aye that what it is, when Ah hear yon, Ah ollus feel rare an' pleased at Ah tewk to t'road, ahstead o' gooin' in there, when t'hand weyvin' wor done away wi'.
- J. Bolton: Wah, its warmer i' winter time there, an' ollus dry, an' they addle more ner we dew. Bud they woddent heh me cos Ah wor lame.
- Abe Sharp: Nou, an' they woddent heh me, cos Ah woddent go. When it wor talk'd abaht mh gooin' Ah said, nay Ah've neht so-varry long to live, an' t'bit o' time Ah hev Ah'm neht bahn to be caged up t'day long. An' ther's too monny maisters an' gaffers an' owerlewkers i' them shops fer me. Ah hope 'at them 'at goes like it, fer Ah like fowk to please ther sen, bud its nowt 'i my line, An' Ah knaw an' owd man gets paused abaht there war ner t'prentiss lads. Let me heh t'sky aboon mh, an' nowt between, Ah dont care whether its blue er grey, its better ner t'mill. (Two girls come along the road to the stile on their way to the mill.) Sitha at these two lasses, that shews the' what t'miln is. Ther runnin to get in afore t'bell stops. If ther a minit latt, owd red nose 'at sits i' t'penny hoil, 'll fine 'em, an' snap ther heeads off beside. Shoo's a rare gurt bengin lass is that last un. Who i' sha?
- J. Bolton: Aw its Sally Baker's lass, shoo lives t'next door to where I lodge. They call her Sally tew.
- Abe Sharp: Sally's i' sha, shoo's a grand lass, Ah dont care whose shoo is.
- J. Bolton: Deyeh think so?
- Abe Sharp: Nay Ah think nowt abaht it, Ah'm sewer, duzzent tha?

J. Bolton: Ah dew that, bud Ah wish Ah didn't.

Abe Sharp: Hah's that?

J. Bolton: Nay dont ax mh.

Abe Sharp: If it hurts the' to tell mh, dont. We'se ettah get to wer wark. (The two men get down from the stile, and pick up their tools. The two girls come up to the stile, and as they get over they have a few words with the men.)

Abe Sharp: Ye're running lasses.

Sally: Aye we're latt. (To Jonas.) What tha dewin' here?

J. Bolton: Workin'.

Sally (who appears puzzled and amused): What, A roadman, Ah ollus thowt it wor owd men, 'at work'd on t'road. (To the other girl.) Bud we'se ettah bi goin', we'se ettah cut an' run. Ah can hear t'bell's slackenin'. (Nothing more is said. The two girls hurry away through the wood, Jonas looking sadly after them as they go.)

Abe Sharp: Shoo's a bahncer is you, what duz to call her.

J. Bolton: Sally Baker.

Abe Sharp: Aye Sally, (Jonas still stares in the direction the girls have gone.) What ta starin' at? Ther goan. Ther at t'mill bi nah. Thah thinks shoo's a bahncer, nah duzzent ta?

J. Bolton: Ah dont knaw what Ah think.

Abe Sharp: Ha-h owd are ta, duz ta say?

J. Bolton: Twenty-three.

Abe Sharp: Ah gat wed when Ah wor twenty-fower.

J. Bolton: Yeh did.

Abe Sharp: Ah did that. Aw Ah wor a forrard un. Bud it wor all reyt. Ah'd gotten a lewn, an' ther wor plenty o' wark. Sometimes when Ah'd a gooid warp in an' gooid weft tew, Ah could addle nearly thirty shillin' i' t'week. We navvied on varry fair, shoo helped mh a bit, winndin' bobbins, and wi' t'warp. My wife wor a bahncer, a bit like yon Sally. It made mh think o' t'towd times, when Ah saw yon lasses go springin' ower t'stee. When Ah put mi foot dahn nah, it's t'same as if it wanted to stop dahn. Bud when

Ah wor like yon lasses, bahncin' bahncin' like as if Ah wor made o' gutta percka. Ah could mack t'lewm fair sing agean. Eh, Ah wor reyt fair happy then. T'lewn rattlin' away i' t'chamer, an' t'wife singin' dahn stairs at her weshin' er bakin', an' t'barns laughin' an' shahtin' t'gardin. Eh, bud it wor some an' grand. It 'ud hev hed to ha-been summat varry spicey 'at 'ud o' made mh swop. An' Ah wor mi awn maister tew, Ah could work when Ah liked, an' laik t'same. There's noabody nah-a-days hauf as happy. Ther to mich teed up an' maister'd. We've been ruined wi' inventions an' black coits. There wor t' pahr lewm comm, an' my owd hand lewm wor no use. Steam-kickers we called t' pahr lewm weyvers, bud we wor done, rump an' stump. Ah've goan threw t' rough sin' then, harder wark an' little er no wage. T'owd lass, Ah'll give her her due, shoo stuck to mh, an' kept her heead up, did baht new cloas, an' made t'owd uns dew, an' ollus saw 'at we'd plenty to eyt, rough as it wor. An' t'barns gat up somehah, lucky we heddent mich sickness. Monny-a-time, it wor like climin' a hahse-side wi' a top-load on. It lewk'd as if we sud bi bet, dew as wh wod. Bud wi' one sort o' tewin' an' scrattin' an' another, we kept aht o' debt, an' nivver ass'd onnybody fer a haupenny, ner threw on to t'club a singal week.

J. Bolton: Bud ve've been poorly, hevn't yeh, ye'd thraw on then.

Abe Sharp: Nou Ah did'nt. Tha sees it's this way: Ther's what they call t' better sort o' fowk, an' ther's t'tother sort. Ther' t'poolers an' them 'at swings behint. Nah, Ah ollus made mi mind up 'at Ah'd be behodden to nobody, nou, neht if ah pined: Mi father wor t'same. He gat threw, an' I'se get threw. T'warkhahse an' tahn pay issent fer sich as us. Its happen silly pride, bud it is there. If ther's owt owin its t'world to uz, neht us to it. (Jonas is evidently not taking much heed of Abe's talk, for he looks out through the wood.)

Abe Sharp: What ta lewkin' at?

J. Bolton: Nowt.

Abe Sharp: What ta thinkin' abaht. 'Tha lewks vary yonderly?

J. Bolton: Nay Ah wor nobbud thinkin' abaht what yeh said abaht t'owd days, when ye wor young an' so happy. It did'nt last long long did it?

Abe Sharp: Nou, an' it could'nt ha' lasted so long hahivver things hed been. Bud it 'ud a lasted monny a year longer fer me, if it heddent o' been fer t'dammed mehchanics, wi' ther pabr lewm. Bud they didn't get me into t' miln, Ah watch'd that. An' Ah'm noan grummlin' nauther. Ah hed mi day if it wor short, an' Ah enjoyed it baht hurtin' onnybody; an' ther's lots 'at niver hez a lewk in, all t'days of ther life.

J. Bolton: Wod yeh reccommend a young chap to get wed?

Abe Sharp: Nou Ah suddent.

J. Bolton: Bud ye've been wed yer sen, an' ye say ye've nowt to grumm'l at?

Abe Sharp: Aye well thats true, bud Ah suddent advise awther one way er another. Ther's so monny things to tack inta accabnt. An' its a lottery when tha's done thi best. Ah ollus say its a bit like gropin' fer fish in a beck, is weddin'. Yeh finn'd one, a' yeh get hold on't, an' chuck it on tu t'benk. If it's a traht, so weel an' gooid, bud it may be nowt bud a pricklyback, an' then where are yeh. Yer wed, an' yeh ettah mack t' best on't.

J. Bolton: Bud if yeh knaw a reyt un.

Abe Sharp: Aye if, an' it is'nt all plain sailin' then. Yeh want a hahse an' a tothre bits o' traps. An' summat to live on. Its nobbud fooils 'at gets wed wi' ther fingers i' ther mahth. Ah dont want to flay the', bud fer onnybody wi' thy wage, er mine, to talk abaht weddin', its like a barn roarin' fer t'mooiin, he'll niver get it, an' if he did he'd bi starved to deeah.

J. Bolton: Bud duzzent it say somewhere i' t'Bible "It is not good for man to dwell alone."

Abe Sharp: Ah suddent wonder, it says a lot of things

'at Ah can mack nowt on. They'll be all reyt no daht, bud they dont seem to fit a chap wi' abaht ten shillin' a week. They may fit a lot o' parsons wi' a deacent livin' comin' in.

J. Bolton: Yeh woddent advise me to think abaht weddin'.

Abe Sharp: Aw, tha can think, bud it suddent tack the' long. When tha's all 'at ivver tha can dew to keep thi sen, tha's nowt to dew bud get reyt hod o' t'fact, 'at weddin,' means tuppence inta a penny shew, an' t'thing's sattled. Ah could'nt say no more if Ah wor to talk a week.

J. Bolton: Think yeh, Ah thowt ye'd know as ye've tried it.

Abe Sharp: Nay, tha's nowt to think mh for. Bud if ther's onny knotty points 'at tha finnds botherin' the' Ah'll ravehl'em aht for the' if Ah can. Bud come on nah we'se ettah frame. Ther'll be owd Tommy Field, comin dahn to hev a lewk at us. Sin' he gat on tut t'Board, he's done a lot o' walkin' gafferin'. Reyt eniff he woddent hurt a midge, bud ther's some 'at 's war ner him. Its near hand a mile fro here to t'brig, an' thee an me, hez to lewk after it, awther to-day er to-morn er some other day, er we'se get to know what o'clock it is.

(The two men gradually move along the road and off the stage.)

(Curtain.)

Act 1. Scene 2.

The same place as the first scene, but evening. Old Abe and Jonas are giving up work for the day. They pick up their tools and put the cans or bottles into their baskets, and their coats on.

Abe Sharp: Well Ah'll bi off. Tha'll be a bit tired wi' a fresh job.

J. Bolton: Aye a bit, bud Ah could dew if it wor'nt fer this leg, it warks wol Ah can hardly bide.

Abe Sharp: It'll tire t'sooinest, it sud give ower at nooin, bud it may get used to t'job.

J. Bolton: Ah hope so!

Abe Sharp: Gooid neet lad!

J. Bolton: Good neet!

(Abe moves off down the road. Jonas, stays near the stile, and looks along the path through the wood. Soon the two girls who pass'd at noon appear.)

J. Bolton: Ah thowt ye'd bi comin'. Weant yeh sit yeh dahn a feh w minits. Isn't it grand an' warm? (The two girls sit on the stile, and Jonas leans against the wall near. Suddenly the one called Molly jumps from the stile.)

Molly: Ah'd fergotten, Ah's ettah bi gooin' home sharp, Tom's comin' sooiner to neet. (Molly hurries away.)

Sally: An' we'd better be gooin' an' all.

J. Bolton: Aye sooin. Ah just wanted to hev a bit o' talk, that wor all. Hez ta fergotten when we used to laik i' owd Barker's cloises i' hay-time, an' harvest?

Sally: Nay Ah think Ah's nivver ferget it. What a duckin' Ah gat when Ah fell inta t'r river, an' tha poold mh aht, an'lamed thi sen wi' dewin' it.

J. Bolton: Does ta knaw what owd Abe's been telling mh to-day? He gat wed when he wor twenty-fower. (There is an awkward pause.) Ah'm aboon twenty-three. (Another pause.) Does ta knaw Ah used to think 'at we, thee an' me mud get wed someday, bud Ah dont see mich chance. If Ah wor rich an' could keep the', i' finery an' all, wod ta hev mh?

Sally: Ah think w'ed better neht talk abaht it.

J. Bolton: Bud Ah want to talk abaht it. Tha likes mh does'nt ta?

Sally: Ah like the' weel, an' Ah ollus sal, bud poor fowk hez to hev summat beside likin' to live on. Its nobbud i' tales where they can live o' love.

J. Bolton: Ah'm neht so sewer, fer Ah've cheer'd mi sen up monny a time, wi' thinkin' 'at tha cared for mh, an' nah 'at tha's taan tult, it 'll help mh on t'road. Eh Ah wish we'd lived when Abe wor a young chap, an' Ah'd been a weyver. Then we mud a gotten wed, fer they used to addle lots o' brass then.

Sally: Aye happen, bud we dont tha sees, an' we'se nobbud mack wer sen misrabler ner ivver if we keep thinkin' abaht what cahnt be.

J. Bolton: Don't say so, we're nobbud young, summat 'll happen come, to bring it to pass.

Sally: Things 'at come o' ther sen, as far as Ah've ivver seen are bad. Ah sal ollus like the', bud it's newse us talkin' abaht weddin', cos we cahnt live o' t'winnd. Ah've seen teh mich on 't. Ahr Jane tried it, an' shoo's hed all 'at ivver shoo could dew to keep aht o' t'warkhahse.

J. Bolton: Bud Duke drinks an' all, beside hevin' sich a little wage. Ah don't dew that.

Sally: Nou tha'rt all reyt. Bud its newse talkin', it's nobbud t' Duchesses 'at talk abaht weddin' fer love, an' they don't. An' if summat can happen, lets wait. Ah knaw it weant. Nou Ah couldn't bide to live an' lewk at thy miserable face, when tha fan 'at we'd made a mistak.

J. Bolton: Tha'at nobbud thinkin' o' thi sen, what's to come o' me?

Sally: Ah'm thinkin' of us both. As long as tha'rt singal, tha can live an' keep thi sen, an' so can I, bud if wh gat wed tha could'nt keep us both, an' Ah've made mi mind up, 'at Ah'm noan bahn to t'mill after Ah'm wed.

J. Bolton: Ah didnt like to mention it, bud we could just manidge if tha went to t'mill, bud Ah weant ax the'. (A short pause.) Ther is lots 'at does.

Sally: Aye ther is, an' Ah'm happen selfish. Bud Ah've seen so mich girnin' an' bidein' it, to go intut t'same box mi sen. Ah sometimes wish 'at Ah wor like tother lasses. They seem to be ollus auther roarin' er laughin', er dewin someat silly. An' nowt bud time pools 'em threw. Bud Ah lewk a bit forrard, Ah cahnt help. An' when Ah see what lewks like misery comin' fo mh, if Ah dew this road er that—Ah hod mi sen, an' Ah dont dew it. Ah knaw tha thinks mh hard, bud if Ah can save both on us misery its better i' t'end.

J. Bolton: Ah dont blame the'. Bud its horrabul. Whativver is sich as me born for? That's what

Ah'm assin' misen monny a time o' t'day. Ah'm i' t'gate, Ah can hardly dew as mich wark as'll keep mh wick—and' as fer happiness er enjoyment, er owt to lewk forrard to, it isn't fer sich as me. If Ah could nobbud lig mh dahn quietly an' go to sleep an' nivver wocken no more that 'ud bi t'best.

Sally (speaking with deep feeling): What hev Ah done, an' what can Ah dew. Tha reckons nowt o' thi sen, an' Ah think the' t'grandest man Ah've ivver seen. Nobbud its no use we cahnt alter things, an' Ah knaw if wh' try we'se mack 'em war. Give us thi hand an' cheer up ther'll be some way done. (Sally here throws her arms round Jonas' neck and kisses him passionately, then as she releases him she says): Nah witta believe Ah love the'?

J. Bolton: That's like owd times. Ah can fergi' the' owt, nah 'at ah knaw 'at tha loves mh.

Sally: That's reyt. Heddent wh better bi going home, mi mother'll be wonderin' where Ah've gotten tul.

J. Bolton: Aye come on. (They move off along the road.)

(Curtain.)

Act 1. Scene 3.

The same scene as 1 and 2. It is spring, and all is sunny and bright. As in the first scene, old Abe and Jonas are seated on the stile.

Abe Sharp: What's t'matter wi' the', tha'rt varry quiet?

J. Bolton: Ah'm 't Ah ollus quiet?

Abe Sharpe: Aye, bud neht t'same as to-day" Arta poorly?

J. Bolton: Nou.

Abe Sharp: Whether tha'rt poorly er neht, tha'rt mackin me war ner useal.

J. Bolton: Ah thowt ye knew.

Abe Sharp: Knew what?

J. Bolton: 'At Sally's bahn to bi wed to-day.

Abe Sharp: To-day, i' sha'? Ah remember nah, they wor sayin' i' t'cobbler's tother neet 'at shoo wor bahn to be wed. Let's see who is it tul? Ah mack no gaum o' sich things nah. Aw Ah remember nah, Sydney Thompson it wor. t'mason.

J. Bolton: Aye that's it.

Abe Sharp: Aw, Ah see nah. Wah thee an' her used to be thick, browt up together; Eh Ah've seen yeh gallopin abaht like mad things, bud that wor afore tha gat lamed. An' Ah remember tha lamed thi sen wi' gettin' Sally aht o' t'deep encher. Eh Ah've thowt abaht it monny a time. It wor a bit o' t'dammdist luck 'at ivver wor, wor that. It just ruined thy chonce o' standin' up an' feytin' fer the' sen, as a man owt to dew. (Abe puts his hand on the young fellow's shoulder.) Ah dont knaw who's to blame, men, er divels, er what, bud to see one knock'd dahn an' trodden on as tha's been in a civilised Christian country as fowk call it. macks my blood fair boil. An' tha'art noan bi thi sen. Lewk at them 'at's blinnd, hah they've to trail abaht beggin', frozen to dedeath ommost, sewerlee someat could be done, to streyten t'road fer them 'at's no chonce of a fair goin' on. Ehstead o' that they'll get sich as the' cos yeh cahnt mack t'best o' yer little bit o' strength, to work fer a thing o' nowt. An' to crahn all, tha' hez to be shoved on tut road like an' owd man, to wait o' deein'. Neht fer a year er two bud a lifetime, An' somebody else weds her, 'at sud ha been thi wife. It's just hellish.

J. Bolton: Aw dont. Ah knaw yer mad for mh, cos Ah'm bray'd dahn an' held there, but Ah'm t'best when Ah dont think awther o' what is, er mud, er hez been. Bud its no use, Ah cahnt work to-day, as Ah owt to dew. Leave mh bi mi sen, Ah'd rayther.

(Abe moves away to his work, Jonas sitting still on the stile. Presently the Church bells are heard ringing a merry peal. At the sound of this Jonas bows his

head. Some time after the bells have ceased he lifts his head, his face brightens, and he shouts to his old friend.)

J. Bolton: Abe! Abe! Ah've conquered, Ah've conquered.

(Abe approaches with a serious look of curiosity on his face, not knowing what to expect.)

Abe Sharp: 'Tha's what?

(With a look of dignity, almost of joy, Jonas meets Abe's look.)

J. Bolton: Ah've conquered, an' Ah suddent ha' done, if Ah heddent ha' come to mi wark, an' ye heddent spocken aht as yeh did. Ah could'nt see no way bud mackin' an' end o' things. Ah'd set aht, hah Ah'd dew it, an' where, and when. Ah feel as if Ah'd tell'd yeh, bud don't guess er think abaht it onny more. Ah've conquered Ah tell yeh.

Abe Sharp: Tha duzent think mh so sharp Ah think. Wah, sitha, Ah've reckoned thee an' thi bother up neht bi what tha said, Aw nou, Ah'd nobbud to see this face, that wor eniff. Bud come on wi' the', lets get into some wark, that's t'cure all. Bud its like t'most o' these gurt medcin's it may kill, but its t'biggest cure ther is an' does more curin' ner all tother put together does wark.

J. Bolton: Wark.

Abe Sharp: Aye wark. It may sahnd silly Ah know, bud it is'nt. Its what all t'gurt doctors orders fowk. They call it exercise, it sahnds more i' t' gent line Ah expect, bud its just wark, when all's said an'done. They get ther dumb bells an' ther Indian clubs, an' beng 'em abaht wol they sweeat like brocks. They heh ther bats an' balls an' foot-balls fer the'r gamms. Exercise that's what they call it. If it wor call'd wark they woddent dew it. Men are sich fooils. Us chaps hate it cos we're forced to dew it fer a livin, bud if tha can nobbud call this hack a dumb bell, an' this shool a Indian club, an' go on wi' thi wark its all reyt. It saved the' to-day, an' it'll go on savin' the'. Whenivver

Ah'm reyt bet wi' things, an' me heeads gettin maddled Ah ollus fly to wark.

(After a short pause Jonas says:)

J. Bolton: Ah wish yeh'd ax me to go home wi' yeh to neet.

Abe Sharp: Aye come lad an' welcome. We can talk things ower a bit o' t'harstun, an' saddle when to begin dikin' you bit be t'wood-boddum, where it falls rayther sharp. Ah noticed yesterday 'at t'wotter hed gotten agate o'swillin t'wer t'road an' roitin' t'little stones up.

J. Bolton: Aye, we can dew that, bud Ah wanted to come cos Ah could'nt face owd Judy where Ah lodge. Sha's so full o'pity, an' sha will talk, an' Ah knaw to-neet shoo'll be full o' t'weddin'. Callin' Sally prahd, an' selfish for neht stickin' to mh, ehstead o' gettin' somebody 'at can let her stop at t'home, an' don up a bit. Ah dont want nay Ah cahnt bide to hear it. Ah s'al ettah hev it sometime, bud Ah can bide it better happen in a bit.

Abe Sharp: Ah knaw, shoo'll bi gabble gabble gabble like a clockin' hen, an' all t'time shoo'll bi suited i' t' boddum, 'at it isn't thee 'at's gotten Sally, an' 'at tha'rt bahn to stop an' keep her a bit longer aht o' t'warkhahse. Ther a funny lot is women, Ah can tell the', mine wor a reyt un, a tip topper, bud ther's varry feh w like her. Aye tha mun come wi' mh to neet. Lucky Ah've a bit of summat extra fer t'drinkin. Come cheer up, nah it's owered.

J. Bolton: Ah'll try.

Abe Sharp (Abe looking along the road): Hollo who's this, Aw I see it's owd prick-o-lop t'new Boardman, nah tha mun lewk aht, we'se leearn someat nah.

(A dapper little man dressed up for a week-day walk saunters along the road, and stops to chat with the roadmen.)

Abe Sharp: Good mornin', Mr. Procter.

Procter: Good mornin', Abe.

Abe Sharp: Dewin' a bit o' surveyin' eh'm; just lewkin' t'rolls over eh?

Procter: Nay Ah thowt Ah'd just don mi sen up, an' hev a bit of a walk. Ah wor workin' a bit latt yester-neet, finishin' Sydney Thompson suit fer t'weddin'.

Abe Sharp: Ah see, t'pent on yesterday, laikin' to-day. It macks mh think o' mi hand-lewm days. Hah deyeh like bein' on t'Board? Ah knew ye'd get in.

Procter: Hah did yeh know that?

Abe Sharp: Aw Ah heeard tell on yeh bein' i' t'Cross Pipes, an' as far as Ah could mack aht, ye wor i' favour o' ivverything 'at onnybody wanted bein' done, an'yeh wor bahn to lower t'rates, at t'same time. Ah knew ye'd get in. Ye're just t'sort o' man 'at's wanted. Yeh stood t'treat a bit tew, didn't yeh?

Procter: Ah suddent call it treatin'. All t'glasses happen'd to be empty when Ah call'd. An' it wor no use talkin to men wi' empty glasses.

Abe Sharp: Neht a scrap.

Procter: So Ah tell'd t'lanlord to fill 'em, when he browt me a glass. Yeh cuddent call that treatin'.

Abe Sharp: Aw ther is 'at wod, bud as I worn't puttin' up this time, Ah sal let yeh kersen it yersen, an' whativver yeh call it, it's a varry neighbourly trick. An' yeh gat in, that's t'main point. It's t'warst when yeh treat fowk an' duzzent get in. Let's see, Ah ommost ferget what yeh promised. Ther wor gas an' wotter laid on i' t'hahse, ameng other things. Bud yeh miss'd one thing. If yeh'd nobbud promised that yeh'd ha' been at t'head at t'powl.

Procter: Aye, what wor that? Ah'm a Liberal yeh knaw, nay Ah mud ommost say a Radical, Ah believe i' fowk hevin' what they want i' reason.

Abe Sharp: Aw this is reasonable eniff. Yeh owt to ha promised 'em 'at if ye gat in, ye'd see 'at they hed neht just gas an' wotter, bud ale an' all, laid on at t'same time. Dont yeh see. No more Public Hahses, no more rowlin' home drucken. Bud fill fer yer sen just when yer dry, at home.

Procter: Aw Abe, Ah nivver saw yer marra. If yeh can squeeze a bit o' fun aht o' owt yeh'll dew it.

Abe Sharp: Well, nivver mind, yeh gat in bahit promisin' what ah've mention'd, bud if t'rates turns stupid an' duzzent come dahn as yeh promised they wod, when yeh put up agean, ye'll ettah try free ale.

Procter: Abe, Abe, yeh mun heh yer joke whativver comes er goes.

Abe Sharp: Well, yeh see, it's a varry cheerful job is ahrs, speshly when it snaws an' rains. An' yeh loaden us up so wi' wage, wol it tacks us all wer time to spend it. We're hard set Ah can tell yeh, to get shut o' one lot, afore yeh smash another lot on tul us. Ther's Jonas here, yeh oppen'd yer heart reyt, when yeh gave him nine shillin'. What wor yeh thinkin' on? Of course when a chap's a wife an' a lot o' barns they help him, bud hah a singal chap's bahn to shut sich a wage licks me. An' Ah expect t'Board 'ud grummal if he sat up at t'neets tryin' what he could dew wi' wine an' cigars to keep his benkin' accahnt dahn. It's a bad lewk aht fer t'rates if that's t'way ye're bahn on.

Procter: Whativver hezta agate, Ah cahnt reckon it up no road.

Abe Sharp: Nou an' Ah don't care whether yeh can er neht, yeh little Jack-i'-office, Ah heeard tell on yeh t'varry first meetin' o' t'Board.

Procter: This is no place—

Abe Sharp: Yeh proposed an amendment 'at t'lad sud heh nine shillin' ehstead o' ehleven, as if that wor'nt little eniff. Keepin' t'rates dahn, Ah dont knaw what yeh desarve, bud if yeh stick cloise eniff to t'Cross-Pipes, yeh may live to knaw hah mich ale yeh can ahforrd aht o' nine shillin' i' t'week. T'man 'at hed t'job on t'road afore me, wor a brocken-dahn taylyer.

Procter: Ah did'nt expect this—

Abe Sharp: Nou, Ah knaw that, bud yeh sud hev thowt o' that afore yeh'd been so forrard wi' yer amendments. (Exit Procter.)

J. Bolton: What sal Ah dew if he gets mh seck'd?
Deyeh think he can?

Abe Sharp: Nivver thee heed. Tha'rt like all tothers
'at's at t'lowest. Tha'rt flayd t'Boddem 'll drop
aht. Tha's no' 'casion. Ah heeard they'd tried
ivverybody to dew thy job fer nowt, afore they
set thee on. Breeten up wi' the', and come on,
lets go home, tha's hed bother eniff fer one day.

(Curtain.)

Act 2. Scene 1.

The interior of Abe's cottage, where Jonas now lives
with Abe. Time, night. A candle on a little round
table. Abe seated in an old armchair by the fire.
Jonas seated by the table reading. He has read the
story of Nelson at Trafalgar. He puts the book down
and looks at Abe.

Abe Sharp: Ah'll tell the' what, bud he wor a boy wor
Nelson. He just hunted them French an' them
Spanish wol he caught 'em, an' then whollop'd
em, and he gav 'em sich a thinkin' on, 'at we've
been safe ivver sin.

J. Bolton: Ah wonder hah it 'ud a-been if they'd been
to monny for him, an' lick'd him, an' if Bonny-
parte hed been t'maister o' t'Iron Duke, as yeh
call him.

Abe Sharp: Nah that's a licker. Ah expect if that hed
happen'd, lots o' a'French 'ud ha come ower here.
Bonny 'ud ha' shifted owd George of o' t'throne,
an' happen made him inta his coachman, 'cos
us English reckon to knaw someat abaht horses,
an' t'French dont. T'hahse o'commons an'
t'hahse o'lords' ud a-been spenk-whewed to
nivver-heed 'em. He'd noan o' stood them
gabbin on. neht he marrey. All t'gurt fore-
manin' an' gafferin' jobs 'ud ha' been done bi
French men. Ah suddent wonder if bitter Jos
t'rate collector 'ud a lost his job. An' sich as
thee an' me 'ud ha' been humbugg'd an'
grummll'd at i' French talk, an' happen paid i'
French brass.

J. Bolton: It duzzent sahd as terrabul as Ah thowt it

wod. We suddent ha' been so mich war ner we are, sud wh.

Abe Sharp: Well Ah'm nobbud guessin' tha sees, it's nivver been tried i' ahr time. Ther 'ud bi no king er dukes er lords to-day. They woddent ha' toppled one lot off an' let another lot get inta t'same shops. Ah expect we sud ha' leearn'd to eyt frogs an' sup wine, them 'at could pay for it. Ah dont know hah they'd a done wi' sich as us. We mud ha' been better happen ner we are under t'English. Ah sometimes think 'at ther' couldn't be a mich war system ner ahrs. Here them 'at does t'hardest an' muckiest wark gets t' least wage. If the divul his sen hed invented t' system he couldn't ha' done it war. So Ah don't see 'at sich as thee an' me hez onny 'easion to bother wer heeads abaht Bonny er onnybody else.

J. Bolton: Hah is it 'at when onny o' these men 'at talks, gets up, they're ollus talkin' as to hah grand it is to be English, wi' wer liberty an' freedom an' all that sort o' thing. What do they mean, is it all talk?

Abe Sharp: That's abaht what it is wi' t'most on 'em. Tha's seen a pint o' ale new an' fresh, wi' t'froth standin' up aboon t'pot. They ettah blaw it of afore they can sup. All that gurt talk's t'same, it wants blawin' off, afore mich notice sud bi taan o' what t'chap hes to say. Ther is sich a thing as freedom. Tha cahnt see it, an' tha nobbud knaws abaht it when tha comes across tother thing, as tha does, i'ivvery other country. Then, bi all acchants tha thenks thi stars tha'rt English. Bud t'warst on't is ther's two sorts, one sort is where tha can dew as ta likes, an' t'other is where tha can dew as tut tell'd, er as other fowk like. If these chaps 'at go bletherin' up an' dahn, tub thumpin', 'ud just say which sort o' freedom they mean, tha could mack summat o' ther talk, bud they awthur dont know er weant tell the' so Ah mack nowt o' ther talk.

J. Bolton: My word, sich as ye owt to be on t'Local

Board, ye'd streyten 'em up, an' get summat done.

Abe Sharp: Me on t'Local Board. (Abe laughs.) What could I dew on t'Local Board? I've nowt to go on for. If Ah'd a tothre cottages 'at wanted drainin' er a road mackin' tul em, er if Ah'd a lot o' property, an' Ah wanted t'rates kept dahn, whativver happen'd to t'fowk, Ah mud happen want to be on t'Board. Er if Ah wor a busy-body, an' lik'd to hear mi sen talk, like yon Procter, Ah mud want to be on. Then Ah could go an' talk all sorts o' hobgob abaht tahns bisness, i' t'bar-parlour. Nou, bad as Ah am, an' Ah'm nobbud a bit of a foil, Ah sud be wasted on t'Board.

J. Bolton: Ye've been a rare gooid friend to me Ah knaw that. Ah dont knaw hah Ah sud ha' done baht yeh.

Abe Sharp: Give ower talkin'. What sud I ha' done sittin' 'here bi mi sen? We're streyt so far. Tha owes me nowt, an' we can navvy on vary fair, if fowk'll let us alone. Reyt eniff Ah'm gettin' a bit wahr ivvery year.

J. Bolton: We weant talk abaht that.

Abe Sharp: Nou, but it is there, an' nah 'at tha's geen up this weddin' job, tha wants to club in wi' somedy a bit younger ner me, fer Ah cahnt last fer ivver.

J. Bolton: Ahm reyt as long as ye'll heh mh.

Abe Sharp: Aw Ah'll heh the', fer Ah like the'. (Jonas takes up the book.)

J. Bolton: Hev Ah to read a bit more?

Abe Sharp: Nou, ther's nowt 'at matters so mich 'at after they'd gotten hod o' Bonnyparte. Ah've read it monny a-time. An' sometimes Ah've a sort-o-wish'd, just fer t'sake o' argument, 'at Bonny hed maistere'd 'em, just to see what 'ud ha-come on't. An' whether t'idea o'hevin' one gurt empire, wi' all t'nations in, 'ud a work'd. It sahnds all reyt, an' he mud ha' made it gee, if he'd geen his mind to manidgin' it, an' nowt else. Bud its newse speckelatin' when he's deead. An' its gotten to bi bed-time. We'll

be off sooin to neet, fer we'se hev' a hard day to-morn, we've all yon steaup piece to stoan.

J. Bolton: All reyt. Bud what's that, somedy at t'door?

Abe Sharp: I heeard nowt.

J. Bolton: But Ah did. There it is agean, like somedy roarin'. (Jonas goes to the door, and listens, then opens it. At the door a woman and child are seen. She is weeping.)

J. Bolton: What's t'matter, come in. Sally, whativver is ther agean?

(Sally Thompson lifts up her tear-stained face, and looking across the room to Abe.)

Sally: Mun Ah come in?

Abe Sharp: Aye come in wi' the'. Ah noan wanted to see the' Ah'm sewer. Bud whativver is ther? Hez he turn'd the' aht i' one of his drucken higs?

Sally; Nay it's wahr ner that, Ah gotten used to that. Nou, we're all turn'd aht, er sal be, if Ah cahnt rise t'winnd fer some rent. We've hed t'bumms i' t'hahse fer days nah. An' Ah've been all ower to try to borrow, so as Ah could get shut on 'em. Ah knaw it'll nobbud be puttin it off fer a bit, fer Sydney drinks ivvery haupahny he can get hod on, Aw barn what mun Ah dew what mun Ah dew?

Abe Sharp: Sit the' dahn i' this chair, an' give ower roarin' then tell us all abaht it. Ah'm flayd tha's com'd to t'reng shop fer a job o' that sort. (Sally sits down by the fire, her child near.)

J. Bolton: Eh, Sally, Ah didn't think it 'ud come to this. He must be aht of his heead to go on drinkin'. An' hah grand an' comfortable yeh mud ha' been, if he'd acted like a man. Ah nivver reckon'd o' this, it's awful.

Sally: It's wahr ner that, fer he's mad jealous o' me an' all. All this time 'at Ah've been beggin' o' one er another to help me, he will hev' it Ah'm after some man, an' Ah'm sewer he's nivver hed t'least cause. Aw Ah wish Ah wor deead, an' if it wor'nt fer t'barns Ah wod be. What can Ah dew? Ah owtent to heh com'd here, fer if he finns me here he'll kill thee.

J. Bolton: Nivver mind me, Ah can lewk after mi sen.

Abe Sharp: Nah Solly pool thi sen together, roarin' 'il dew nowt, an' talkin abaht Sidney an' his temper 'll dew no gooid at all. What deyehe owe?

Sally: It's t'rent, just t'rent. Ah've been aht charir' an' addled what kept us i' cake. Sydney hezent averaged givin' me five shillin' a week fer a long while. An' he's fresh er drucken t'most of his time. T'lanlord kept comin' an' Ah thowt sewerlee Sydney 'ud pool up, an' try to pay, bud he hezzent. An' nah t'bumms is in. An' they'll sell us up 't'next week if Ah cahnt get hod o'summat to stop 'em.

Abe Sharp: Hah mich is t'bumms in for?

Sally: Fower pahnd ten shillin'—nine months' rent.

(Abe studies a few minutes, then he says to Sally)

Abe Sharp: Go into tother rahm wol Jonas an' me talks it ower.

Sally: Bud if Sydney comes, Ah darn't stop.

Abe Sharp: Go in there, if Sydney comes he cahnt aboon kill us.

Sally: Ah wish Ah'd nivver come, Ah's get ye into bother an' all.

Abe Sharp: Tha hez come, an' we are i'bother, an' we're bahn to try to get thee aht on't, so dew as Ah want the'. (Sally retires.)

J. Bolton: Whativver can wh dew, eh, this is a job.

Abe Sharp: We can dew nowt wi' whinin' at onny road. Nah, we've both a pahnd er two saved up. Ah dont knaw hah mich tha hez, it cahnt be mich. What Ah hev woddent burry mh, bud Ah can let t'club dew that. So if tha's a mind we'll lift Sally aht of her trouble. Bud t'divul on it is, if her husband weant frame, Sally'll go dahn, dahn, dahn, an' nowt can stop her. What's ta say?

J. Bolton: This is my bother. It'll tack all mine, bud it is'nt fair fer ye to stand in.

Abe Sharp: Nou, happen neht, bud Ah'm bahn to dew. An wi' summat beside brass if Ah can. Tell Sally to come. (Jonas brings Sally in.)

Abe Sharp: Well, we've agreed 'at thi bits o' traps sahnt be sell'd up this tims as-hah. Bud ye'll get as bad as ivver if Sydney duzzent alter.

Sally: Ah'm flayd he nivver will.

Jonas: Duzzent he treat the' reyt.

Sally: He treats mh t'best when he lets mh alone, Ah fair dreeahd him comin' in.

J. Bolton: Hah is it tha duzzent leave him?

Sally: If it heddent been fer t'barns, Ah'd ha' left him long sin, an' Ah can see nowt else i' t'end. Eh, Ah little knew what Ah wor tacklin' when Ah tewk him. An' to thing Ah sud etta come to thee, to help mh aht. It sarves mh reyt.

J. Bolton: Nou, nou, don't say that! Mack t'best on't an' Ah'll help the' if Ah can.

Abe Sharp: Nah then, hah wh bahn to dew this job. Who wants this brass, t'bumm er t'lanlord er Who? Heh wah to frame to neet er when? T'brass is here.

(A violent knocking is heard at the door; general consternation.)

Abe Sharp: Who the divul's that?

Sally: Ah'm terrified, eh if it sud be him.

Abe Sharp: Oppen 't' door. (Jonas goes to door and opens it. Enter Sydney Thompson. He looks angrily round, then speaks to his wife.)

Sydney: What tha dewin' here?

Sally: Ah've come.

Sydney: Tha's come (pointing to Jonas). An' this is him tha prates abaht—an' a bonny ratten lewkin' begger he is. Ah've a gooid mind to lether yeh both. (Sydney rushes at Sally, but Jonas comes between, and receives a blow which stretches him out on the floor. Sally screams and tries to help Jonas but fails. Sydney rushes at her but trips over a chair and falls full length on the floor. In an instant Abe is on the top of him, and grabs him by the throat. Sydney yells.)

Sydney: Hod off er Ah'll kill yeh. (Abe grabs his throat all the tighter and soon Sydney shows signs of collapsing. Abe watches Sydney and when he sees he is exhausted he relaxes his hold. Sydney, who now is very sober and cowed, recovers somewhat.)

Abe Sharp: Nah what hez ta say for thi sen, comin'

hammerin' an' brayin' at fowks doors at this time o' t'neet?

Sydney: Ah wor seekin' t'wife; somedy tell'd mh shoo wor here.

Abe Sharp: Aye an' tha knaws what shoo's come for, er if tha duzzent, tha wants hingin' up bi t'heels, wol t'bit o'sense tha hez gets into thi heead, an' tells the'.

Sydney: Shoo's too fond o' Jonas.

Abe Sharp: If tha sez another word agean awther her er Jonas, Ah'll choke the' t'spark aht. Whats a hauf pined miserable woman want wi' onny-boddy? Yeh drucken fooil, nah 'at Ah've chok'd the' sober. Sally comm' here, when shoo'd been all ower tryin' to borra some brass to get yon bumms aht o' t' hahse. An' where wor tha; a gurt sweggerin' mason 'at can addle thi thirty shillin' a-week; where wor tha wol Sally wor tryin' to borra brass o' two poor divels 'at's both paid wi' a sovereign. Tha desarves gibbitin' o' t'first Public Hahse-sign we could finnd. Bud it's Sally Ah'm bothered abaht neht thee. If tha'd cokk'd thi toes up, shoo wod ha' scratted on' o' some feshun. Bud tha'll nauther live like a man, ner dee like a man. Tha' reckons to be jealous. Jealous! Ah'll tell the' what. If Ah'd been Sally, Ah'd awther ha' had a better man ner thee er noan. What are ta? Tha'rt nowt bud a tub. Yon rain tub i' are back yard's as fit fer a husband as thee. When it rains it gets full o' wotter an' runs ower; when tha's brass er strap tha gets full o' ale an' runs ower. It runs ower wi' wotter, bud tha runs ower wi' curses an' lies, an' low mean skulkin' thowts a hah bad other fowk are, cos tha 'rt bad thi sen. Er is it t'ale 'at does it? It's a lame doo to lig it 'o' t'ale. Bud Ah'd like to see a bit o' hope for the' if Ah can. Arta bahn to gie t'ale up? If ta will Jonas an'me 'll help the' aht o' t'oil tha's gotten intul.

(Sydney hangs his head and appears thoroughly ashamed of himself.)

Sydney: Ah wish yeh'd finished mh off. Yeh mud as weel. Ah'm no gooid an' nivver sal be. Ah've no mind o'mi awn, Ah cahnt keep off it. T'ale's t'maister. If Ah promise Ah's nivver keep it. (He looks across the room at his wife, who is weeping.) Poor Sally, tha little knew what a waik foil tha wor swoppin for, when tha threw Jonas ower fer me.

Abe Sharp: Think o' thi barns man. Let t'past alone if it'll let thee alone. Jonas is a reyt man wi' all his draw-backs, an' Sally's a reyt woman. All 'at thy sodden heart could dew's been done to 'em both, an' it's fail'd. It's thee 'at's reng. An' tha's just one chonce. Let ale alone. Whativver other fowk can dew, tha cahnt touch it an' keep streyt.

Sydney: Ah'll promise owt, bud it's nobbud me 'at's promisin'. Ah feel nah 'at Ah woddent touch it agean whativver comm.

Abe Sharp: Well, what's to say Jonas, hew'ah to risk it?

J. Bolton: If ther's a chonce, let him hev it.

Abe Sharp: Nah then, Ah'm bahn to dew summat to try to keep the' streyt.

(Abe pulls his red handkerchief off his neck and hands it to Sydney.)

Sydney: What's this for?

Abe Sharp: Put it on. (Sydney puts the tie on). Nah tha's promised us three, nivver to touch ale agean. Aye us fower (pointing to the child. Then Abe points to the tie.) That's to mack the' think o' t'time when I hed hod on the' bi t'neck, an' held the' fro what thee an' ale mud ha' done wi' some o' us. When tha'rt bi thi sen an' feels like goin reng, it'll bi there an' hod the' back. Fer if tha's onny thowt at all, it'll mack the' see us here, to neet just as wh are. An' if that weant keep the' off it, nowt will. Nah, Sally, come here.

(Abe sits down by the table, and Sally goes to him. Abe counts four pounds ten shillings on to the table.)

Abe Sharp: That's what tha said, isn't it. Hauf on it's mine, an' hauf Jonases.

Sally: Ah dont like to tack it, fer yeh can heh nowt to spare. Aw barn ther's no robbery like this.

Abe Sharp: Sally, Jonas an' me's prahd to help yeh. We'll risk t' fewter. Bud we've noan geen yeh't. Nou that woddent dew at all. It woddent bi fair to Sydney. He'll hev a bit o' pride some-day Ah hope, an' then he'll come like a man an' pay us back. It 'ud ruin all if we gav yeh't. Bud we sahnt send t'bumms.

(Sally picks up the money weeping.)

Sally: Ah don't knaw hah to thenk yeh.

Sydney; Nou ner me. Ah mun say summat. (Abe waves him off.)

Abe Sharp: Nou tha moant, Owt 'at can be paid wi' thenks, isn't worth mich. Thenks is winnd. Tha's a hard feyt. Thee an' Sally together. Keep that neckleth on, an' dont ferget to neet.

Sydney: Bud dew let's.

Abe Sharp: Neht a word.

Sydney: Let's shack hands at onnyrate.

Abe Sharp: That cahnt dew no harm. (They shake hands in silence, Abe and Jonas kiss the child. As they go through the doorway they say good-night. When they have gone Jonas bends down with his head on the table between his hands.)

Abe Sharp: Jonas, what ta dewin'. Ah thowt Ah said tha wor a man.

J. Bolton: Ah knaw, Ah knaw, but Ah couldn't help.

Abe Sharp: Hod thi heead up man. It's nobbud them 'at's put t' balance o' t'reng side; as mi fater used to say; 'at sud hing ther' heeads. Tha'rt ameng t'poolers. Let them shame 'at's swing-ing behint. Bud come on, it's latt, let's be off to bed. We've a stiff day to-morn. (The two men leave the room.)

(Curtain.)

A RUM AN' TEA DOO.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

First Performed at Baildon December 16, 1914, with cast as follows:—

MRS. TOPLADY (Hostess)	MISS MARY HUTTON.
MRS. CLARKE	} (Guests) {	MISS EDITH WHITAKER.
MRS. BEDWELL		MISS ALICE ANDERSON.
MISS COOPER		MISS KATHIE MACVIE.
MRS. BROWN		MISS CARRIE BOOTH.
MR. BROWN		MR. WALTER MANN.

Period, Seventy Years Ago.

Scene: Mrs. Toplady's Parlour. Time: About four o'clock in the afternoon. Mrs. Toplady giving things a bit of an extra touch to make them tidy and trim before anybody comes.

Mrs. Toplady: Ah'se ettah heh things as tidy as Ah can mack 'em, if yon sister o' Julia's is comin'. Ah wish shoo'd been an' goan an' we'd heeard t'last on her. Bud we nivver sal as long as Julia's a tongue in her heead. An' what i'sha, er who i'sha, 'at ther's all this fuss abaht her. Shoo calls her sen a lady's maid, an' shoos been i' London. Well a lady's maid is little er gurt, bi t'size o' t'lady shoos maid tul. An' Ah nivver heeard 'at her mehstriss wor what they call a titled lady. An' as fer livin' i' London, fowk 'at's been say 'at it's that threng 'at yeh could walk o'ther' heeads. Well—Ah'd rayther hev' a bit more elbow rahm ner that. An' then sometimes ther' smoor'd wi' t'fogs, one chap said, 'at ye could cut 'em wi' a knife. So Ah don't see 'at there's mich to swegger abaht becos they've lived i' London. An then what maddens me is—(Here Mrs. Toplady knocks an ornament from the mantel she has been dusting.) Drat it! Ah wish Ah'd nivver touched it, an' it hezzent been touched lattly. (She picks up the ornament and finds it is none the worse.) It izzent brockken, an' it's as weel fer if it hed been Ah sud ha been sewer to snap Julia up abaht summat, or happen contridict t'famous sister. Brockken! Ah woddent heh that brockken fer a lot o' brass, it belenged to my gurt, gurt granmother. Ah wonder if Julia ivver hed a gurt granmother, er one at shoo durst tack tul. Relations are all reyt, when they lift ye up, bud like as neht they pool yeh dahn, an' when ye've both a lot o' wick ens 'at's no gooid, an' a feh

deead uns 'at's been to leet wi' ther fingers, er to long wi' ther' tongues, ye're fit up. Ah don't wonder sometimes 'at ther's sich a cry aht fer desert islands, an' when they cahnt get em, 'at fowk just cut an' run, baht saying owt as to where they're bahn, an' then call thersen some other name where they've gotten tul. Let's see if all's ready; aw its here all reyt. (She gets a large bottle out of a drawer, pulls the cork with her teeth, has a sniff, then studies a few minutes.) Ah don't know what to dew, but if Nanny Gobbleton hedn't wotter'd hers t'last time Ah wor there, somebody hed done it for her, that's all. "Just smell at this," said Libby Bland, and when shoo said so, Ah knew what shoo meant. "Wotter," Ah said. "Aye," shoo said, "its as near teetotal stuff as dar be." "Keep us sober," Ah said. "Aye, an' happen mack us poorly tew, ye don't know what sort o' muckment ther's in't," shoo said. Ah don't know what to dew. It owt to be wotter'd fer some on 'em, fer they're nivver stalled. Ah just hed it o' mi tongue end t'last time Sally Brown wor here, when shoo ax'd fer her fift cup, to say, "Here tack t'brahn cream and fill yersen, 'bud Ah didn't, an' it wor as weel, fer Ah heeard 'at their Rufus hed been varry cross wi' Sally when shoo gat home, an' ax'd her if shoo'd been to t'Shoulder o' Mutton. (Mrs. Toplady looks at the bottle again, then shakes her head.) Nou, Ah weant, fer if Ah did, Ah sud nobbud hev it o' mi conscience, an' beside if they fan it aht, 'at it wor waik, they'd just put more in, and t'owd hands 'ud be sewer to nose it. An' then tew it 'ud spoil t'party, fer Ah tack tult, it duzz lowsen ther tongues, ther's nowt like it fer that, an' if it macks 'em talk a bit bigger it duzzent mack so mich difference, becos they don't get believed, at onnyrate ther' varry silly 'at tacks it all in. (She puts the bottle back into the drawer.) Nou, Ah weant, fair doos, as ahr Jos ollus sez, when he's gotten abaht as mich more as onnybody else. Ah dew hope Sally weant

begin abaht her uncle, if shoo does, Ah may spragg her afore shoos goan so far. Ah's noan ferget what Ahr Jos said when Ah began' o reelin' aht what Sally hed said at Mrs. Towler's. "Shut up," he said. "Who's been stuffin' the' agean? Wha little Billy wor t'tahn's talk when Ah wor a lad. T'times 'at he'd brocken an' t'dodges he'd been up tul to get on baht payin'. An' nah becos he dons up a bit an goes to t'Church, he's ommst a saint." Ah's ettah pop mi cake in nah. Ah hope Ah hevvent owerdone it wi fat, but Ahm noan bahn to be done dahn wi Nanny Gobbleton, neht I marry. Hers, shoo said, hed threatened to run aht at t'oven. It wor so rich. (She puts the cake in the oven.) (Mrs. Toplady looks up at the case clock, which has just struck four.) Its time they wor here. Sally Brahn 'el be latt as usal, shoo ollus is. Hepzipah Clark 'll be here i' two minutes. Ah saw her go up to t'doctors. T'loads o' medcin shoos taan 'ud sink a ship, an 'Ah don't believe shoo ails owt at all. Aw herè shoo is. "Come in, Mrs. Clarke, Ah hope ye're o' t' better feshun. to-day, what a gettin on ye've hed to be sewer. Ye must hev' hed a grand constitution to begin wi'."

Mrs. Clark: Aye, bud it is'ent what it once wor, an' if Ah'd hed a puttin on t'same as some, Ah sud ha been wi' t'angils long sin.

Mrs. Toplady: Ye're a bit to heavy fer flying yet, an' t'angils 'll ettah wait a bit Ah'm fit to think. Bud ye knaw t'best hah yeh feel. Dar' ye tack yer shawl off?

Mrs. Clark: Aye, Ah'll risk it, bud Ah hardly knaw what to dew fer t'best.

Mrs. Toplady: Ye've been up tahn Ah see. Wor ther owt er onnybody stirrin'?

Mrs. Clark: Nay, hardly a face, an' t'doctor wor aht. They'd send for him fro Baxter's.

Mrs. Toplady: Aye, what's t'matter there?

Mrs. Clark: Nowt 'at Ah knaw on. Nou, he'd been gettin' his noggin er hauf noggin o' gin, hed t'doctor.

- Mrs. Toplady: My stars, bud he's tunn'd some gin intul him this last twenty year hez t'doctor, as mich as 'ud a drahdend monny a score.
- Mrs. Clark: Wah, Ah say, he must hev a call for it, 'er he'ed nivver taek it.
- Mrs. Toplady: Aye wah barn it's as ye say, fer he's bun to know. When Ah hed him t'last time we ollus kept a bottle i' t'cubberd, an' then if he felt a bit faint he just made his'sen a glass an' no more abaht it.
- Mrs. Clark: Nah, that's what I call reyt homely on him. If ye've onny mendin in ye, it comes aht wi' sich a doctor. It wor some an' different wi' owd Johnson. He just bullyragged yeh fer t'least little bit of a thing. "What's t'matter wi' me?" Ah said one neet when they'd fotched him to mh. "Nowt a no moment," he said. "It's what we called stuff'd goise' i' t'college." "Ye dont mean to say 'at Ah've etten to mich," Ah said. "Now Ah don't," he said, "bud ye hev fer all that. Ah'll send yeh a bottle o God help 'em, bud ye'll be better afore ye get it," an' t'warst on't, 'Ah wor. Bud worn't it brutal nah?
- Mrs. Toplady: He wor a bit plain spöckken Ah remember, bud he wor t'best doctor, fer t'inside we ivver hed i' t'parish. Ah used to say Dr. Jones may be his maister where cuttin an' carvin comes in, bud gie me Johnson fer owt i' t'inside. An' what a gurt gaumless lewkin' chap he wor fer sewer, wi' his cloas sprodden ower him fer all t'world like a flay cow. Bud he'ed a heed on, an' that's t'main thing.
- Mrs. Clark: Well, happen ye're reyt, bud I'd rayther hev Baxter. He ez a bit a sympathy wi' ye, bud he's a poor hand at givin ye medicin. "Are ye givin ower givin fowk medicin?" Ah said to him once. "Aye," he said, "when ther better baht." An' that wor all Ah could get aht on him. Bud Ah've fun aht 'at ther all fonder o' axin questions ner answerin 'em.
- Mrs. Toplady: Excuse me a minit will ye, ther's knock at t'door.

(Presently two ladies are ushered in, in front of Mrs. Toplady.)

Mrs. Toplady: Go forrard will yeh. Mrs. Clark's just lewk'd in afore yeh. Mrs. Bedwell, ye knaw Mrs. Clark? Introduce yer sister.

Mrs. Bedwell: Mrs. Clark, Ah sud think Ah dew. Miranda. (To her sister) this is t'lady, Nah shoo'l tell yeh hah to mack all t'soarts o' frewt wine 'at ivver wor made, we noan on us can touch yer. Can wh, Mrs. Toplady?

Mrs. Toplady: Well to tell ye trewth, Mrs. Bedwell, Ah hevvent tried sin' t'Vicar gat a bit fresh when they cursen'd ahr Mary Jane. Yeh see, just sit ye dahn (to the ladies). Yeh see, as Ah wor sayin' ivverybody wor pressin' him to drink t'barn's health wi' them, an' when he said, "No, No." "Aw," they said, "It's nowt bud home made, just teetotal stuff." An' so he gav' in to suit 'em one an' another. But in a bit, his ees began a bobbin' an' twinklin', an' then they gave ower, an' bulged aht like peggy legs. An' when he gat up to talk, neht 'at ther wor owt to talk abaht, fer it wor all ower'd then, he couldn't say a word fer a bit, an' then he strewk into an owd huntin' song. Well we stared at one another, bud it wor no use, fer he framed to get war an' war. So ahr Jos slipt aht at t'back door an' then comm' bahncin' in at t'front, an' said 'at t'Vicar wor wanted at home. An' Jos gat him away, an' left us all starin' at one another as mich as to say, "It was be home made 'an' it may be teetotal stuff, bud its' been to monny fer t'Vicar. Bud Ahtha say we've a bottle or two left, if onny on yeh wod like a drop. (All the ladies: Nou, nou, ye're varry gooid, bud no think yeh.) Wah ther neht all like ye, fer it cahnt be to strong fer some. Bud I say ivverybody to ther' taste, we don't want no tyrannee i' wer eytin' an' drinkin'.

Mrs. Clark: Aw nou, ye're reyt there, Mrs. Toplady, fer fowk tak to little as weel as to mich. Ah knaw when Ah spaned ah'r John William, it wor a case o' life er deeth wi' me. Let her hev

(Mrs. Toplady pours a drop of rum into a cup and hands it to Mrs. Brown.)

Mrs. Toplady: Nah then sweep it off, an' don't pool sich a face.

(Mrs. Brown does partly as she is told, but pulls a wry face, as if she was taking a dose of medicine.)

Mrs. Toplady: There, tack yer shawl off, and sit dahn somewhere aht o' t' draught, and we'll sooin hev t'tea ready.

(Mrs. Toplady lifts the kettle off the fire and proceeds to brew the tea. She gets the cake out of the oven and puts it on a large plate.)

Nah just sit into t'table nah, all on yeh. Ah sahtnt be monny minutes.

Mrs. Brown (Grown quite brisk, being offered a seat by the fire): Neht at all. Ah'm as reyt as ony on yeh nah, an' Ah don't believe i' coddlin' misen.

Mrs. Toplady (pouring out the tea): Will yeh hev white er brahn, Mrs. Clark.

Mrs. Clark: Ah niver touch at home, fro year end to year end, except when somb'dy pops in, bud if t'others are hevin' a drop, Ah'm noan bahn to be t'odd un to stand stupid.

Mrs. Toplady (with the rum jug, begins to pour into Mrs. Clark's cup and by Mrs. Clark shaking Mrs. Toplady's arm gets an extra drop).

Mrs. Clark: So, so, don't Ah tell yeh, Ah'm noan used tull't?

Mrs. Toplady: (to Mrs. Bedwell): An' which fer ye?

Mrs. Bedwell: It's nh use mackin a obstacle to begin wi'. T'same as Mrs. Clark, please.

Mrs. Toplady: An ye, Miss Cooper? Will yeh condescend?

Miss Cooper: I suppose ye take it 'cos ye think it 'll dew ye good?

Mrs. Toplady: Well, pairtly that, an' pairtly 'cos we like it, an' pairtly--(looks round at the others) hev Ah to tell her?

All: What?

Mrs. Toplady: Nay, ye knaw; pairtly becos it breetens us up a bit, warms t' cockles o' wer hearts, as owd Peggy t'wise woman used to say.

- Miss Cooper: Well then. Just to be friendly, bud vary, vary little.
- Mrs. Toplady (pouring it in): Ye can trust me fer that, can't sha, Mrs. Clark?
- Mrs. Clark: Aye, if ye arn't t'reckless side aht, then Ah woddent trust yeh so far.
- Mrs. Toplady: Mrs. Clark, Ah did think Ah could get a keractar fro ye. But Ah'm happen like t'lad 'at had forgotten his—better baht it. (To Mrs. Brown) Nah, are yeh ready to join us?
- Mrs. Brown: Neht a drop fer me after what Ah've hed, Ah dar'nt.
- Mrs. Toplady: For sewer ye dar, we're all hevin' a drop, an't t'drop yeh gat afore dozzent cahnt. It wor a soart of 'ball fer nowt' as t'lads say when they're crecketin'.
- Mrs. Brown: Ye dew as yeh like wi me, Mrs. Toplady. Go on then, it can't mak so mich difference, as t'sayin' is—Ah mud as well be hung fer a sheep as a lamb. (The tea drinking now proceeds pretty quickly, the faces become warm, and the talk more animated).
- Mrs. Toplady (to Mrs. Brown): We wor talkin' abaht home made wine afore ye comm. (To all): Bud Ah dont knaw what I ivver brew' onny for, fer to tell yeh t'trewth, reyt fair at 't boddom Ah'm a teetotaler.
- Mrs. Clark: Wah so am I.
- Mrs. Bedwell: Nah thats cappin, fer both Miranda an' me is in a way speykin.
- Mrs. Brown: We mud as weel all be unanimous, as Mrs. Toddlem said, when shoo saw 'at all t'wimmin i' t'fold, hed gotten a new hat bud her. So ye can sign t'pledge fer me an' all. Bud Ah sudent call misen vary biggeted over t'job.
- Mrs. Toplady: Aw noa, Ah cannot dew wi' narra biggeted ways misen.
- Mrs. Clark: Ner me nauther fer all ahr Tom is vary particular.
- Mrs. Bedwell: Well I nivver, it seems we're rayther a picked lot, a sort o' druffy teetotalers, I think that 'ud be t'class for us if this wor a bird show.
- Mrs. Brown: Mrs. Bedwell ye're all fer classin fowk.

Ah've heeard yeh o' that string afore (Turning to the others) Ye'd all tack it as a medcin Ah expect, Ah knaw Ah sud.

All: Aw aye.

Mrs. Brown: Bud Rum and Tea's hardly that. Isn't it what they call a beveridge.

Mrs. Clark: Well Ah've hed monny a doo wi' ahr Tom; when he's t'reng side aht; just abaht that. He will hev it 'at its just tackin' it, same as gettin' a glass wi' some wotter tult. Bud I contend 'at its nobbud t'same as vinegar er pepper, er salt er mustard just a flavour to t' Tea.

Mrs. Bedwell: Of course. Bud what does Tom mack aht? He'll neht agree, men nivver dew.

Mrs. Clark: Nay Ah think Ah'd better neht tell yeh what he said. An' after all yeh cahnt lig a rewl fer other fowk. An' if yeh dew they weant stick tult. When yeh knaw, 'at ther is fowk 'at ommost go reng i' ther heead wi' t'smell on 't. An' some 'at can walk across t'tahn gate as steady as a case clock, wi half a gallon o' ale an' tohhree glasses o' liquors in 'em, ye're abaht bet wi 't.

Mrs. Toplady: Thats reyt Mrs. Clark ye are, an' we cahnt get mich nearer ner callin rum i'tea a flavour. So if yeh've a mind weel saddle it at that.

Mrs. Clark: Ther's nowt no more come aht, hez ther' o' what we wor talkin' abaht at Mrs. Gobbletons. Molly hesn't left him?

Mrs. Toplady: Neht as far as Ah've heeard on, bud Ah hev'n't been aht mich, an' as fer ahr Jos, he nivver bothers his heead wi owt bud his wark an' his meals, an' if onnybody tells him owt, Ah hev to rooit it aht on him, like gettin' potates, an' Ah can nivver tell whether it's his cunnin' er just his gaumless way.

Mrs. Clark: Well, Ah did hear a whisper, bud if Ah tell ye, yeh moant let it go onny farther, but it comm fro t'next door. Yeh knaw, Ah expect, who all t'bother's abaht?

Mrs. Toplady and Mrs. Brown: Nou!

Mrs. Clark: Well, that's another secret, but it's a soart of a runnin' secret be nah. Aw, it's t' beggidge at keeps t' Red Lion.

- Mrs. Toplady: What, Dave Crumpy's widow? Aw dear.
- Mrs. Clark: Well, t'party we've been talkin' abaht's goan theer a lot, sin' Dave deed, an' his wife will hev' it, 'at he's ta' thiek wi' t'widah. Bud he sez 'at he nivver bothers wi' t'widah, bud goes theer like onybody else, fer a bit o' company. Bud theer they are. Ah heeard 'at shoo'd thrahtened 'at if he went theer onny more shoo'd go dahn to t'ahse an' ruffle t'widah her toppin' for her. An' yeh knaw shoo's hawf a Paiker, and they've all tempers, hez t'Paikers, so we'se hetta wait an' see.
- Mrs. Brown: Well, Ah back her, Ah woddent stand it.
- Miss Cooper: Shoo's happen driven him tull't wi' her temper. Men weant stand owt, an' t'widow may be soft an' winnin'.
- Mrs. Toplady: Is them yer London notions? Miss Cooper. Fer if they are, Ah reckon nowt on em. He's wed her, hesn't he? He wants to stick tul her then. My stars, ye get a husband, Miss Cooper, an' then we'se see what ye've gotten teh say abaht these widdahs 'at's so soft an' winnin'.
- Mrs. Bedwell: Can I get a word in?
- Mrs. Toplady: In a minit. Ah hevvent done yet. Nah wheer sud we be, if ivvery man 'at heddent gotten a angel fer a wife, sud be allahed to go lolopin' up an' dahn t'world seekin' one? An' when he's fun her, t'one at he's sworn to love an' cherish—what does cherish mean? Ah've allus ta'en it to mean stick tul—then as Ah say, when he's fun t'reyt un, his wife hez to tak a back seat. An' Ah've another thing to say, Miss Cooper, and Ah'll say it teh yer face. These 'at's so soft an' winnin' don't come fro t'upper, bud fro t'lower regions, so theer.
- Mrs. Bedwell: Mrs. Toplady Ah'm sewer Miranda didn't mean to cast a reflection on onnybody.
- Mrs. Toplady: Ah deh ve knaw, what shoo meant?
- Mrs. Bedwell: Ah'm used ta' her.
- Mrs. Toplady: Yeh can be used to fowk an' neht knaw 'em. Some are as deep as a draw well, bud Ah can happen hev mi awn opinion?

Mrs. Brown: Beggin' yer pardon, Mrs. Bedwell, bud Ah think Mrs. Toplady's reyt, fer ye remember that minx 'at comm an' set all t'tahn of a blaze four er five year sin? T'men, owd uns an' young uns, they cuddent talk abaht onnybody else. When shoo walked shoo did touch t'grund nah an' then, to be sewer, bud shoo cud a flown if shoo'd hed a mind. An' sich a figger! It wor just perfect both i' bulk an' shap'. Then her face, wi' it's nivver-to-be-forgotten smile—that wor what t'Curate said, if Ah'm neht mistaen. An' as fer her voice, shoo wor as good as Jinny Lind er better. Well, ye all knaw, shoo made more bother nor onny hawf dozen other women, an' it wor fair a relief fer onnybody at hed a husband, when shoo'd sattled which shoo'd run away wi'.

Mrs. Toplady's reyt, ye may be sewer. (This speech seems to mollify everybody, and they are quite settled when Mrs. Toplady speaks.)

Mrs. Toplady: Nah come. Ye're all to threng talkin'. Ye'll hev another cup, Mrs. Clark?

Mrs. Clark: Aye, but plain.

Mrs. Toplady: Nay, Mrs. Clark, don't run away fro a blessing, ez t'Vicar says. (Holds the brown jug over Mrs. Clark's cup) Say t'word, ther's no compulsion here.

Mrs. Clark: Wah nah then. If it's ta' strong Ah can leave it.

Mrs. Toplady: Don't talk abaht leavin' it, it's nobbud yer second cup. Mrs. Bedwell, was yahr's agreeable?

Mrs. Bedwell: Aye, Ah relished it, bud this time Ah think Ah'll stick to t'cow.

Mrs. Toplady: What, t'one fro Jamaica? All reyt.

Mrs. Bedwell: Nou, nou, t'owd sort.

Mrs. Toplady: That's all reyt! This is t'owd sort, t'other's fer barns.

Mrs. Bedwell: Eh Mrs. Toplady, it's trew what Ah wor sayin', when Ah press'd mi sister to come. Wah Ah said, Mrs. Toplady's just a queen fer hospitality!

Mrs. Toplady: No flattery, if yeh please, Ah'm to owd

fer that, bud ye're welcome to t'best Ah hev. Miss Cooper will yeh put up wi' another cup o' poor Yorkshur stuff?

Miss Cooper: Thenk yeh kindly, an' if ye please I'm Yorkshur tew, as mich as onny on ye.

Mrs. Toplady: That's reyt. It's to bad on us, to keep agate like that. Fer ye'll hev monny a rub an' bit of a slur to put up wi' in London I'll be bun.

Miss Cooper: Aye at t'first, bud when they fan aht 'at Ah gav' 'em three haupence fer ther' penny, they gav ower axin fer change. Bud ye're to gooid to mh. an' Ahm neht used to sich treats i' London.

Mrs. Toplady: Nowt i' ther' tea?

Miss Cooper: Nou.

Mrs. Toplady: Eh bud that's funny, varry funny. Nah Ah wonder whether they ivver tewk it an's geen it up; Ah can hardly believe that; er they've nivver picked it aht what a' improvement it is to plain tea. If that's so, ye mud give Ahr custom a start an' bi lewk'd up to ivver at after. Bud that's funny nah is'ent it? Gurt flash Lunden an' neht a drop o' rum i' ther' tea.

Miss Cooper: Well Ah mun see what Ah can dew when Ah get back.

Mrs. Clark: Ye'd hear abaht owd Thrippenny Sammy, an' what a disappointment it wor to all t'lot at hed been expectin' a draw when he deed?

Mrs. Toplady: Aye, Ah heeard an' they wor reyt sarved. Ah hevvent a bit o' pity fer 'em. What I say is—frame on an' dew fer yersen, ahsteead o' hingin' abaht an' playin' t'hypocrite to get hod o' summat at ye've no claim tull. Sammy wor to' sharp for 'em, he saw threw 'em, that's just what it's been. They tewk him to be a foil 'cos he wor owd, but he'd sammed summat beside brass together, sadly to mich sense fer them. An' nobbut to think o' t'miles they've truded to t'Church, an' t'long faces they've pooled to keep o' t' revt side on him. An' all t'plans they'll hev made as to what they'd dew wi' it, when they gat it, an' nah he's gone an' left most on it to t'church. They dew say 'at when Naomi heeard

t'll read, shoo flew inteh sich a passion, 'at they thowt shoo'd a choked.

Mrs. Bedwell (Jumps up and looks fiercely at Mrs. Toplady): They dew, an' it's a lie. Tack that to begin wi'. Nah Mrs. Toplady, Ah didn't think when Ah com' inteh yar hahse, 'at Ah com' to be insulted.

Mrs. Toplady: Nou an' who hez insulted yeh?

Mrs. Bedwell: Wah ye, and yeh know it.

Mrs. Toplady: Ah'm sewer Ah don't.

Mrs. Bedwell: Then sit yeh dahn, it's my turn nah. Ah've bidden wol Ah can bide it no longer. Naomi's awn cousin te me, mi father's sister wor her mother, an' here teh mi face ye've said that 'at nobody could stand.

Mrs. Toplady: It's true.

Mrs. Bedwell: It's no better fer that. Ye don't expect me when Ah come here, to begin rakin' up all t'bits of silliness at ye an' yahr family's done, these last twenty year. Ah don't dew sich things an' that Ah'll let yeh know.

Mrs. Toplady: Yeh can if yeh like.

Mrs. Bedwell: Ah know Ah can, but it 'ud be no information, an' 'ud do no gooid to me. Happen ye remember 'at yeh said 'at these 'at owd Thripenny hed cheated wor reyt sarved. Well, I'm one on 'em, an' Ah want to ax ye, an' fer t'matter o' that him tew, deead an' goan as he is, what I've done at him, except bein' a relation. All Ah can say nah is 'at Ah hope t'relationship's at a final finish nah. (Mrs. Bedwell can scarcely speak for passion, she restrains herself a moment, then goes on) Nou, Ah've thowt better on't. Ah'll mack no remarks abaht him, Ah forgive him, but fer ye Mrs. Toplady, to ding us up, i' yer awn hahse, abaht wer misfortuns. (To her sister) Get mh mi shawl Miranda, this is no place fer us.

Mrs. Clark: Aw deary me, an' to think hah nicely we'd goan on just happy an' gossipy, tellin' one another bits o' news. But ye moant go, Mrs. Bedwell. It wor my faut, an' nobody else's. Ah owt'nt to hev' mentioned it, bud Ah'd no idea

y'ed owt teh dew wi it. If ye weant stop Ah sud nivver forgi' misen. Naw dew stop, to please me. Think what a thing it 'ud be; wah it 'ud be all ower t'tahn afore bedtime abaht t'break up o' Mrs. Toplady's party. An' think o' yer sister. What a tale shoo'd hev to tak back to London, an' yeh can see Mrs. Toplady's upset so as nivver, aren't yeh nah Mrs. Toplady? (Mrs. Bedwell still keeps bustling about, and gathering her wraps up.)

Mrs. Toplady (gets up from her chair): Ah can't go dahn on mi bended knees 'cos Ah've t'rheumatics, but as far as ligs i' mi pah'r Ah beg on yeh to stop. Ah can say fro mi heart 'at Ah've nowt agean nawther ye ner Naomi, an' as fer owd Sammy, Ah've no cayshun to back him up nauther, deead er alive, fer he helped te ruin mi awn father, an' shorten'd his days, so ye cahn't hate to'wd skinflint onny more ner I dew. (Mrs. Bedwell cools down and lets Mrs. Clark take her cloak, then seats herself at the table.)

Mrs. Bedwell: Eh barn, bud Ah wor upset, an' what made me madder ner ivver wor at Ah sud be mad at all abaht t'owd taistril at's made all t'bother. Robbed yer father, did he? Aye an' monny another. t'owd beggar. Ah nobbud said yesterday to Naomi at we'd happen missed t'curse of his brass, an' that mud a ruined us soul and body together, and then wheer sud we ha' been? Wheer he is Ah expect. It'll tak a lot o' parsons an' churches to keep him aht o'—ye knaw wheer.

Mrs. Toplady: Come on, t'kettle's just boiled agean, an' Ah've brewed a drop o' fresh tea. Hand yer cups in, an' don't lets waste time over t'dead, wol we're wick an hearty (takes up the brown jug). Just a drop to drink his health, wheer-ivver he is.

Mrs. Bedwell: Ah'm i' yahr hands, dew as ye'd be done by. Bud remember Ah've ahr maister to face, an' that afore owt's long.

Mrs. Toplady: Oh, he's a gooid soart, is yahr. If Miranda nivver gets a war shoo'll hev no cay-

shun to grumml. An' ye've nivver telled us if ther wor owt in t'wind, an' Miranda's ta shy?

Mrs. Bedwell (Grown quite all right after the little tiff): Hev' Ah to tell Miranda?—Shoo woddent, av nou, fer shoo tacks after her father fer being cloise. Bud ther' is a young man Ah don't think Ah sud be goin' to far if Ah said gentleman.

Mrs. Toplady (smiling at Miranda): Eh, Miranda, ye're a deep un.

Mrs. Bedwell: As Ah wor saying (to her sister), Nah don't stop mh. Its gotten so far 'at they've been fortygraph'd together in a varry lovin' position. Ahr maister an' me could nivver ha been strucken off like it I'm sewer, bud they dew say 'at they're more lovin it t'saht. He's a grocer. He is sent so tall bud he's brooad, an' his friends says hez whiskers like a Duke.

Miss Cooper: Julia dew give ower, Ah cannot fer shame let ye go on onny farther.

Mrs. Bedwell: It's nowt to be ashamed on.

Mrs. Toplady: Nou, indeed; it's t'main bit o' pride we hettah feed on; is, 'at somebody's been sharp eniff—er silly eniff, to see summat in us, 'at we noan on us knew abaht.

Mrs. Bedwell: Run yer sen dahn emeng us as hard as ye like, bud as fer me Ah think mi sen as gooid as onny man. Bud yeh put mh off, Ah wor bahn to tell yeh his name. But if yeh'll excuse mh, we'el keep that i' t'back grahind fer t'present. He's a grocer an' sings in a choir. It's at a Methody chapil, bud sin' owd Sammy made sich a hal of his'sen wi' t' owd church I'm noan sorry at Miranda's bahn to wed a Methody.

Mrs. Clark: They aren't ollus 'tmost religus 'at sits i' t'singin seat, bud ther' better ner brass band men. Ahr Sarah wed one o' them, an' a bonny time shoo hed fer sewer, fer nowt 'ud fit bud he mud rawt away wi' his instrument of a neet, mackin' all t'ornaments fair dither an' shack, an' skiftin ivvery livin thing aht at t'oil. An' if a word wor said, off he set an' gat fresh, an' when he comm back began playin' war nur ivver.

Ye think yer stars Miranda 'at he isent a band man.

Mrs. Toplady: Nah don't ye tack so mich notice o' Mrs. Clark, for shoo's ta'an agean all music sin' their Sarah wed intut brass band. An' Ah'd a uncle in a band, an' a nicer man ye couldn't wish to see. Of course Ah knaw hah it is; Sarah's husband plays one o' them trombones; ye'll ha heeard 'em, they mak a terrible din, an' ye'll ha seen hah t'chap keeps slurrin' a thing in an' aht an' blawin wol he's ammost black i' t' face. (Turning to Miranda): Hah far hev' yeh getten, may Ah ax? Does he come inside? an' hez he put t'spurrins in?

Miss Cooper (simpering): He wanted to dew but—

Mrs. Toplady: Bud what? Ye stopped him? Don't say so, Miranda, fer we sahn't believe yeh.

Miss Cooper: Well, he didn't act'ly say so to me, bud he said as mich to t'cook wheer Ah live.

Mrs. Toplady: Aw well, we all wish yeh t'best wishes, mine i' particular, fer Ah hed a young man 'at wor a grocer, an' he wor one o' them 'at talks to ether fowk abaht yeh, ahsteead o' comin' to t'point wi' her 'at he reckons to be courtin', so when Ahr Jos tewk mh home fro t'skooil-feast one Wisenda', an' spluttered summat off, "as to hah he liked mh, an' 'ud wed meh, if Ah wor owt i' t'mind," Ah tewk him wol Ah hed t'chonce, grocer er no grocer. Ah hope yahr grocer 'll be a bit forrader ner mine wor, fer he niver gat wed.

Mrs. Clark: Ah think we can trust Miranda to lead her grocer to t' altar, an' that—(Mrs. Brown interrupts and Mrs. Clark stops to give her a chance).

Mrs. Brown: Nay, Ah nobbut wanted to ax whether Miranda's grocer wor a tenor er a base? He sits i' t'singing pew, shoo says.

Miss Cooper: Ah think he's base.

Mrs. Brown (sympathetically): Ah hope so, Ah woddent hev' a tenor thrawn after mh. Nou, nou, noan o' yer tin whisel voices fer me, Ah like to hear 'em bell aht like a cauf, it's more manly, Ah don't care who says it isn't.

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Mrs. Clark: Whativver's t'voice to dew wi t'man?

Mrs. Brown: Aw, more ner ye're aware on, it seems. Bud tenors hev' their gooid points, fer they will pally abaht an' dew hahse wark like a woman, swill doorstans, happen, er hod t'barn a bit and dew a bit o' black-leadin er summat o' that mack, an' ye cuddent get a gurt blusterin' base singer to dew that.

Mrs. Clark: Wheerivver hev' ye samm'd yer ideas up? Ah nivver heeard sich a tale. Wah Sims Reeves is a gurt chap; an t'fattest man i' t'tahn, owd Gallibalk t'hand weyver, sings tenor, an' vary waik stuff it is.

Mrs. Brown: It appears my notions don't go dahn so weel, bud Ah hev' 'em fer all that, an' Ah still hope 'at Miranda's young man sings base. An' aboon all, 'at if he's a tenor he nivver sings fal-settor, fer they're t'warst of all, squeakin like a rattan. An' ye've no cayshun to stare fer Ah know what Ah'm talkin abaht, Ah wor a lead-ing singer mi'sen once.

Mrs. Toplady: That sattles it as far as ye're consarned, Ah suppose, Mrs. Brahn?

Mrs. Brown: It duzz.

Mrs. Toplady: Varry weel then, "so far so gooid," as owd Blucher said when he'ed fallen off t'cart load o' hay. "Hod on Blucher," t'chap sang aht 'at wor leadin' t'horse. "Nay deng it," said Blucher, "artah flayd Ah sal fall up agean?"

Mrs. Brown: What's that to dew wi' it?

Mrs. Toplady: Nowt, bud time's going on, an' we've just time fer another cup a-piece. Hod in Mrs. Bedwell an' no ceremony. Mrs. Clark? Ah see ye've just rahm fer another. Miranda, it may bi t'last time Ah's hev' t'honour o' offering yeh a cup under yer maiden name. An' Mrs. Brown, come nah, if Ah did rayther stop yeh sudden, it wor nobbud to gie yeh t'chonce o' drinking t'health o' Miranda's comin lord an' maister. Tenor 'er base it duzzent matter a button, if he ezzent a hard bone i' his back.

Mrs. Clark: Eh, Mrs. Toplady, ye may nobbud be

jokin', Ah don't know, bud ye've bitten t'nail o' t'head, for that's t'root of all t'mischief. As Ah comm' dahn t'tahn Ah passed Sally Jenkins. There shoo wor slavin an' tewin, wol yon skulk of a husband wor sat at t'harstun i' his shirt sleeves. An' they tell me 'at when he's hed a glass er two, ye cahnt hear yersen talk, for his gurt tales about plewin an' mawin' an' all sorts of wark. But yeh can niver catch him dewin a hands turn. T'owd cartwreet fit him up to a tee one day, when he said "Aye Duke, tha'rt what I call a Kersmas hay macker, tha'll shool snaw like a gooiden when ther' is noan, bud when it comes, tha weant sweep thi awn door stones." Miranda, if it wor mi last words, see 'at he's a worker. Niver mind his whiskers, an' i' my opinion it duzzent matter whether he's tenor or base, bud if he weant frame an' bend his back, an's ollus full o' excuses, thraw t'drum sticks up, an' paus t'drumend in, fer he's abaht nowt.

Mrs. Toplady: Eh Mrs. Clark, ye are won up to be sewer Nah, Miranda ye know what to dew, an' Ah hope he'll turn aht a Dick Whittington, an' then we'll all come up to t'Lord Mayor's show. An' ye'll ettah hev a speshul coach for us. To-day it's a cup o' tea, bud it'll be champayue then.

Mrs. Brown (who has shown signs of sleep although she is very cross with Mrs. Toplady): Can I get a word in?

Mrs. Toplady: Nou, ye cahnt. We evvent time fer onny more musical lecters an' if I evvent seen yahr Rufus go across t'tahn gate wi' his tooils ower his shoolders Ah'm sadly mistaen.

Mrs. Brown: Bud Ah mun hev' mi say.

Mrs. Toplady: Ye've hed it long sin'.

Mrs. Clark: Shoo hez! Shoo hez! Nah Mrs. Brown Ah'd advise yeh to go home. Ye arn't yer sen.

Mrs. Brown: Who am Ah? What am Ah? Go on, say it.

Mrs. Clark: Ax yar Rufus. He'll tell yeh be all ac-cahnts.

Mrs. Brown: Ah didn't come here to be insulted be ye,

ner Mrs. Toplady nauther, an' Ah wean't be, so theer.

Mrs. Toplady: Get yer' shawl on as sharp as yeh can, fer Ah see Rufus comin' dahn t'tahn gate, an' Ah don't want him comin' ragin' here.

Mrs. Brown: Ah don't care.

Mrs. Toplady: Bud Ah dew, so lewk sharp. Ah know what a tongue Rufus hez, an if his voice is like thunner Ah don't want to hear it. (Mrs. Brown puts her shawl on, but is so excited that she cannot put her bonnet straight. She is just starting when Rufus bursts into the room.)

Rufus: So this is hah yeh dew, all t'day long? suppin' tea an' blackenin' ivverybody's character 'at ivver ye heeard tell on. (To his wife) Come on home, t'fire'll be aht Ah expect, an' it'll be midneet afore t'drinkin's ready. (They leave the room and their voices are heard in heated conversation as they leave the house).

Mrs. Clark: Shoo's off wi her base singer onnyway; shoo owt teh be happy if it's t'voice shoo relies on. Bud we'se all ettah be goin' sooin, Ah benked mi fire up afore Ah com' aht, bud my man'll be in just afore six. Worn't shoo sewer shoo knew t'secret, hah te find t'reyt man?

Mrs. Toplady: Yeh don't want to think onnymore abaht her fer shoo's as ye said. Mrs. Clark, net hersen, an' Ah'm noan capped fer Ah don't know hah oft shoo did it, bud Ah caught her once givin hersen a extra drop o' rum.

Mrs. Clark: Don't ye blame yersen a bit, Mrs. Toplady?

Mrs. Toplady: Eh bud Ah dew. Bud who'd ha thowt shoo'd come t' same chalk so sooin agean, Ah know Ah saht ax her agean in a hurry. (Turns to Mrs. Bedwell, and Miss Cooper.) Bud nah, i' reyt gooid earnest, tell us a bit abaht this grocer chap.

Mrs. Bedwell (looks at Miranda): Ther isn't so mich to tell. He issent exactly a grocer, he ezzent a shop of his awn, bud he's in one, an' may hev' one some day.

Mrs. Clark: Wheer does he come fro' an' what's his father and mother?

Miss Cooper: I'm sewer I don't know wheer he comes fro, ner owt abaht his father an' mother. They call him Tim Doxey, an' that's abaht all I know.

Mrs. Clark: Nah yet weant think it strange if Ah just tell ye what Ah think abaht this weddin' job, 'at ye seem to be goin at far ower leetly. If Ah'd my way Ah woddent wed onnybody at heddent a pedigree. Ah don't mean 'at his fore-elders com' ower wi t'conqueror, nowt o' that soart. Bud 'at reckoning' back, say to gurt grandfathers an'-gurt grandmothers, they could shew 'at they'd been honest an' hardworking. It's a stiffish test Ah know, bud then it's a stiffish job to live a whole lifetime wi' auther a idle back er a rogue, er what oft happens, one at's both. Nou, ye mun hev pedigree whatever else ye miss.

Mrs. Toplady: Ye're in' reyt dahn gooid earnest, Ah can see that, Mrs. Clark.

Mrs. Clark: Ah am, an' Ah'll just shew ye what Ah mean. Ther's ahr Sam, yonder, ye know him? he's a gurt growin' lad. Well, he's been i' t'rabbit trade lattely, an' nobbut yesterday he com' in a'mmost roarin'. What's wrenc agean? Ah said. "Yon young uns is nowt," he said. "Hah nowt?" Ah said. "Ah thowt tha'd a lot," "It isn't that, bud ther' nauther one sort ner another. Ther ears go onnyway, an' if they'd been reyt lop-eared uns Ah could ha gotten seven pence apiece for 'em a month owd." So Ah said "What soart's t'owd un?" "Aw, t'doe's a reyt lop-eared un." "An t'father?" Ah said, "Ah don't know," he said. "Aw, that's wheer it is," Ah said. "Give ower roarin', tha can dew no gooid nah." Nah, Miranda, we all know ye're a rare gooid soart, an' we sud like yeh to get some'dy like yersen. If yer lop-eared yersen, don't be satisfied wol ye get a lop-eared un to match.

Mrs. Toplady. But if shoo cahnt find one?

Mrs. Clark: Then Ah'd dew baht wol Ah wor as owd as Mathewsalem.

Mrs. Toplady: An' then it 'ud be to latt.

Mrs. Clark: Wah, if Ah did t'other way it 'ud ollus be to sooin, so—Bud ye wor bahn te say summat Mrs. Bedwell?

Mrs. Bedwell: Nay, nowt, nobbut Miranda says at when shoo comes to think on't, her young man sings tenor. Dew ye think it matters? Is it owt to go by? Mrs. Brown wor so strong on t'point.

Mrs. Toplady: Mrs. Brown hed varry little to say on her awn accahnt fer 't last quarter of an ahr shoo wor here, it wor this little chap (holding up the brown jug) 'at wor talkin'. He sometimes blurts t'trewth aht Ah knaw, bud wi all due respect to to him, he isn't to be depended on. Nou, ye've no cayshun to bother yer heead abaht owt shoo said. But (appealing to Mrs. Clark) Ah think we've done all we could for yeh; if we'd hed him here we mud a gien him a character, bud ez we hevent ye'll hev to use yer awn judgment. An' t'warst wish Ah hev is, 'at if he's a reyt un, Miranda, yeh mh get him.

Mrs. Bedwell: Eh, Mrs. Toplady, we hev' hed sich a grand afternoon, an' Ah've more ner fergeen what ye said abaht Naomi. An' Ah'm sewer t'nice motherly way 'at ye an' Mrs. Clark's talk'd abaht Miranda's futer hes so warmed my heart towards ye both 'at if ye'd dew me t'pleshur to lewk in t'next Wedensda, Ah think we'se hev a bit a tea left i' t'caddy, an' Miranda 'll be there; shoo goes back to London o' Thursda; an' weel try to mack yeh welcome an' comfortable fer an' ahr. So good afternoon, Mrs. Toplady, an' good afternoon to ye, Mrs. Clark.

Mrs. Clark: Tack yer time, Ah'l go gaters wi' yeh to t'loin end, its as near that way as t'other to ahr hahse. (Then she turns to Mrs. Toplady.) Thank yeh monny a time for axin mh to come.

Mrs. Toplady: Aw ye're welcome Ah'm sewer to t'best Ah hev, an' Ah'm certain it does mh gooid to hev' a chance o' oppenin mi heart to a fehwbossem friends, an' to hear hah t'world's usin' em, for Ah ollus say, 'at t'bit o' time we ettah live here, we want to be as happy an' friendly as we knaw hah to be. (Exit the three.)

Mrs. Toplady (Mrs. Toplady looks at the clock, which is close to six): They've nobbud just goan i' time. Nah Ah's hev' hauf an hahr o' pell-mell ding-dong rush, to get ahr maister his drinkin ready, fer if it is'nt ready t'minnit he enters t'hahse, Ah sal sooin knaw whether he's a tenor er a base. (She takes hold of the rum bottle.) An' 'Ah moant ferget to put this away aht o' his seet, er Ah sud hear a top note er two 'at wod-dent exactly dew fer t'singin pew. (Exit Mrs. Toplady.)

(Curtain.)

T KAL 'OIL.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

First performed at Baildon December 16, 1914, with cast as follows:—

SAM SIDEBOTTOM (Village Cobbler) ... MR. TOM TURNER.
TOM EARBY (Hand Loom Weaver) ... CHARLIE HODGSON.
DOZEE BERRY (Wool Sorter) ... ARTHUR ROBINSON.
JOE DELVER (Jack of all Trades) ... J. F. OAKES.
HIRAM COOMBES (Waggoner) ... ARTHUR GREENWOOD.
JIM BLACK (Hand Loom Weaver) ... WILLIE FAWCETT.
IKE HOLMES (Blacksmith) ... WALTER MANN.
BETTY SIDEBOTTOM (The Cobbler's Wife) MISS WHITAKER.

Time, Evening. Period, 70 years ago.

Scene 1. Shoemaker's workroom. A stove in the middle of the room. Near the stove a shoemaker's stall or bench. Three or four chairs, of various ages and condition, about the room. On the walls one or two old pictures, mostly of battles. In addition, the walls are covered in many places with rude chalk drawings, probably intended for caricatures of frequenters of the room. The shoemaker is seated on his bench.

He rests his head on his hand and talks to himself.

Sam Sidebotham: Fowk think a cobbler's just a common ivveryday soart o' chap 'at cahrs of a lump on his bench fro year end to year end, wi' tothre sparrables i' his mahth, an' nowt so mich better up aboon. Bud ther' reng. If he's e'es, an' keeps 'em oppen, he ezzent liv'd long afore he's t' mezzar, neht just o' t'feet bud t'heeads of all his customers. As sooin as Ah mezzar a fresh un nah 'at Ah've learned misen by wotchin' an' thinkin, Ah say hellow! let's see what sort of a mungerill hev' Ah here. If he's a reyft flat-foited 'un, an' wears his heels dahn i' t'inside; well, he may be a worker, bud t'odds are agean him, an' Ah know 'at he'll be at a lowse end if he's hawf a chance. Then ther comes one 'at brays his heels off i' no time, both at t'ahtside an' t'back. Ah know he's bow-legged afore Ah see him stride an inch—he'll be a bit of a tewer a some freshun, Ah know that tew. If a keylegg'd un comes shallockin in, Ah know Ah ettah be careful er he'll be off t'walts varry sooin, an' it's lucky fer me 'at Ah've nowt bud t'feet to lewk after fer sich. T'timbertoeed uns, them 'at walks like hens, they're a toughish lot as a rule, bud neht so mich to depend on, an' Ah defy all t'cobblers to mack 'em lewk smart.

T'knockakneed uns, an' t'shailfoited uns are other two lots 'at Ah heh to contend wi', Ah dew

mi best, bud ther's neht mich satisfaction wi' sich like, nauther hegh ner low, an' it 'ud worry a man intu his grave if ther wor nivver nowt else. Bud nah ther's some 'at fair pleases mih, wol Ah can hardly sit o' mi seat. Sich as you lke, wi' a instep arch'd like a brig an' walkin' streyt as a loitch. Ah ollus tack gooid care to keep a bit o' mi best stuff fer him an' sich like, they deserve it. Beng-up, beng-dahn, reyt men Ah call 'em, an' 'Ah knaw what Ah'm talkin abaht. Of course Ah've been taan in monny a time, Ah moant ferget that, bud what Ah say is this, if ye knaw a chap's feet, ye can guess as a rule t'shap an' t'mack o' t'other end. An' its that 'at gives t'cobbler a chonce aboon other fowk, an' sud mack a wise man of him. An' if it duzzent he's noan fit fer t'job, an' owt nivver to ha been put tul't. (He takes up a pair of boots, puckers his lips, scratches his head and shakes it.) Ah'm capt wi' Joe Marshall, he seems to grow skinnier as he grows owder, he must hev hed these booit six er seven years. Ah've soyled 'em awf a dozen times Ah'm sewer, an' they've been cappill'd to-thre times. If he goes on they'll be like Jack Thomson waist-coit, fowk weant be able to tell which is t'owd bit. (He tears off the sole, treats it very carefully and when both are ready for making up, looks at them.) Well, well, it's Joe's lewk aht if he finds his-sen clompin' home some neet wi' hawf a booit on.

(Enter Tom Earby, a hand loom weaver. He carries a stick and hobbles.)

Sam: Hol-low Tom, is that thee?

Tom: Aye, it's all 'at's left. Hah'r ta goin' on?

Sam: Aw, varry fair; mackin' owd uns inteh new uns, bud Ah think this is t'last time rahnd. Hah'r tha going on?

Tom: Aw, Ah'm just full o' rheumatics, what-iver that is.

Sam: Ah don't knaw what it is, bud if tha mentions it i' ahr Bet hearin,' shoo'll hev it i' two minits.

Tom: Aw, Ah did'nt knaw it wor as smittlin' as that.

Sam: It isn't smittlin' at all, bud it's a way shoo hez, an' t'warst on 't is, shoo noan gets better so sooin.

Tom: What? when shoo nobbut thinks shoo's poorly?

Sam: Aye, they tack more mendin' when they ail nowt, medcin wea'nt touch 'em then. Ther's nobbut one way wi' 'em, give 'em summat at 'ull mack 'em poorly, like t'doctor they tell on somewheer i' America.

Tom: Aye, hah did he manage 'em?

Sam: Well, as t'tale 's telled, a chap called him in one day, an when t'doctor hed lewked him ower, t'man said "What's t'matter wi' mh?" "I don't know," said t'doctor, "bud Ah've browt ye some physic, an when ye've ta'en it ye'll heh fits, an' Ah'm just deeath on fits."

Tom: Eh bud ye dew pike some queer tales up, bud t'point is what? 'at I'm actin 't'owd sowdger?

Sam: Nowt o' t'soart. T'point is, Ah don't want ahr Betty i'bed fer t'sake o' thee sweggerin' abaht thi rheumatics.

Tom: Nay Sam, tha macks it war ivvery time tha speyks. Ah cah'nt help yahr Betty bein' a bit catchy, an' heng it all, Ah don't swegger abaht owt Ah ail.

Sam: Ah did'nt mean swegger at all, Ah meant just gabbin' on abaht thi poorliness, that wor all.

Tom: Well, Ah think Ah'll get set dahn afore Joe comes.

Sam: Aye, sit the' dahn an' leet up, a bit o' bacca 'll help the' to fergeet thi pain happen. Ez ta nowt fresh?

Tom: Aw aye, Ah've to-thre bits o'news. This fornooin Ah gat crameled up to t'cart-reets shop, an' they wor sayin' 'at owd Carlin's on t'rant agean.

Sam: Wah, it is'nt long sin' he hed a brek aht afore.

Tom: Nou tha't reyt. That wor when their Sally ran away wi' a sowdger; Ah wor'nt capt at him then, bud just becos a pig ran between his legs an threw him dahn, when he hed a pail o' pig-meyt i' awther hand, he flew inteh sich a passion, an' gat agate o'cursin' an' swearin', then away he went an' filled his sen up wi' gin an' ale as fast as Jim Cob cud draw it for him.

Sam : Wah, he is a cauf-heead.

Tom : Cauf-heead, Ah sud think he is. Wah, that wor Monday, an it's Monday agean nah, and' he hez'nt bin sober sin'. Bud he'll dry up bi Sunday Ah expect.

Sam : Owt else?

Tom : Aw aye. Will Thornton's put t'spurrin's in.

Sam : Hez he? Who wi'?

Tom : Nanny Crayshaw's owdest lass.

Sam : Wah, the'r awn cusins. Ah'll tell the what Tom, if they go on weddin' in an' in like that, we'se ettah get a monkey cage sooin, fer they'll breed back, they cah'nt help thersen.

Tom : Aw, ther just akin o' lumps nah, so they cuddent be so mich war.

Sam : Ther happen flaid o' loisin' t'breed, er is it to keep t'brass together.

Tom : Ah think Ah'd best say nowt abaht it, fer tha wed a loin-euder.

Sam : Aye, an Ah know abaht it.

(Enter Betty. Tom looks at Sam and puts his finger to his lips.)

Betty : Well Tom, hah's this? Hez t'lewm stuck fast, er tha's felled er what? Er hes Nancy turned the' aht?

Tom : Nay, Ah watch that. When shoo's t'wreng side aht, Ah allus hev' a ehrand o' some soart. Ye'll hev heeard abaht Will Thornton an' Nanny's lass?

Betty : What abaht 'em?

Tom : Nay nowt, nobbud they're bahn to be wed.

Betty : Wah ther' a pair, they wean't spoil two hahses onny way.

Tom : What's t'matter wi' 'em? He's a gurt leatherin' chap, is Will an' Ah'm sewer if t'lass tacks after Nanny, shoo'll be all reyt.

Betty : Aye, bud shoo does'nt, shoo's more o' t'father breed, just as queer ez they know hah to be, an' Will doesn't like wark. He nivver seems reyt wun up, wol Setterday t'afternoon, then he's as brisk as onny on 'em. (Shakes her head.) Bud it's no use, ye cah'n't mack a livin' wi just one sort o' gamm an' another. He's noan t' first 'at's tried it, ner t'last, Ah dar'say.

Tom: Ye'd happen better go next Sunday an spragg t'whole thing.

Betty: Nut I marry; Ah mud as weel try to stop t'waves o' t'sea. It's bad eniff mellin' between husband an' wife, ye nobbut get yer heead jowled fer yer pains, bud ye come off war if ye try to stop two young uns 'at's made ther' minds up. But Ah moant stand talkin' here. (Exit Betty.)

Tom: Nah Ah did varry fair, didn't Ah?

Sam: Wah, tha'd a bit o' spiey news, that did it. Ther's nowt licks a weddin' er a burr-in fer wimen.

Tom: Aye, aye, they allus say t'young uns likes a weddin', an' t'owd uns a burr'in. Bud who's this comin' clompin' up t'steps?

(Enter Dozee Berry, a woollorter. Sam goes on with his work.)

Dozee: Tha'rt tappin' away theer Sam, just as use'al; it's t'owd struggle, thee an' thi customers. Ah do'nt knaw which 'll win i' t'end. Ah expect it 'll be t'one 'at dees t'sooineest—if ther is onny winnin' i' sich a feyt.

Sam: What ta talkin' abah't? Ther's a lot o' ye soarters 'at's gotten so ripe i't'heead nah-a-days, 'at Solomon 'll ettah be on t'lewk-aht er he'll hev to tack a back seat.

Dozee: Aw, Ah nivver did reckon mich o' Solomon. Ah darsay he'd be reckoned a sharpish chap long sin', bud ther's so monny things been picked aht sin' his day, 'at he cuddent expect fowk to lewk up tul him as they used to dew, if he wor here nah.

Sam: That's just what Ah say. It 'ud cap him if he comm an' hed a lewk rahnd nah.

Dozee: Aw, Ah expect he wor an 'owd tyrant, wi' his temple an gardins an' wives; they'd cost him a bonny penny, an' Ah expect it 'ud be t' Caanan-ites er t'Jebusites, er t'Philistines 'at' ud ettah pay for 't. It's top nobs nah, an' it wor t'top nobs them, 'at did t'sweggerin' and 't'workers hed to stand t'racket. Bud thee wait a bit, an' tha'll see we'se upset all that.

Tom: Hah' long does ta think it'll tack, fer I'm gettin' to be a owd man, Ah eud dew wi' a draw nah.

Dozee: Aw, we'se penshun sich as thee, becos tha'rt stalled o' wark, an' Sam here, cos he's to fond on't; he'll ettah be stopped bi main force. Fower hahrs a day's long eniff, an' nah 'at we've so mich machinery we could dew it. It nobbut wants union, union ameng t'workers an' it's done.

Sam: Wi'tah give ower Dozee, wi' thi gurt talk, an' sit the' dahn. an' get thi bacca. They've been alterin' things an' bringin' t'millenium in all my day, an' we're just abaht wheer we wor. Ther's allus a lot o' alterin' just fer shew.

(Enter, one after another, Jim Black, a weaver, Hiram Coombes a carter, and Joe Delver, a jack of all trades.)

Dozee (to Joe): Yeh hevvent sich a thing as a hawf-crahn 'at yeh wean't want of a day er two?

Joe: Nou, what for?

Dozee: Nay, Ah thowt Ah'd borrow 't fro yeh, it ye hed.

Sam: Dozee wants to start levilin' up a bit ye see, Joe. Ye've a lot o' brass, an' Dozee hes'nt so mich, an' as we're bahn to be hevin' a squarin' up doo afore owt's long, he thinks ye mud as weel let him hev a bit to be goin' on wi'.

Joe: It's nobbut one o' Dozee's notions, is it?

Tom: Nay, neht just him, we can all dew wi' hawf-a-crahn. Yeh mud as weel shell aht. Ye've nobody to leave it tull when ye dee, an' it may go fer owt ye knaw, to just t'varry fowk 'at ye hate t'most.

Dozee: Ye see it's as Tom sez, it'll save yeh a lot o' bother 'at after ye're deead if ye let's join nah. Yeh dew knaw who gets it then, an' yeh can see what we dew wi' it.

Joe: Ah did'nt come here to be talked abaht. Ye've all as mich brass as ye're fit to spend. Hez onny on yeh a pipe o' bacca to spare?

Dozee: Did ye ivver buy onny fer yersen Joe?

Joe: Aye, Ah sud a-bowt some to-day, bud Ah did'nt want to breck inta a shillin', an' Ah'd nowt no less on meh.

Dozee: What abaht my hawf-crahn? Ah'll gie yeh a pipe if ye'll len' meh that; that's fair onny way.

Sam: Give him a bit o' thi twist, Dozee, it'll keep his bellasis gooin' if he gets onny rick aht o' that.

Dozee. All reyt. (Dozee hands Joe his pouch, and he proceeds to fill a pipe which has a very large head and short stem. Dozee watches him for a time, then shouts.) Nay the divul Joe. Ah don't call that a pipe, it's more like a hogshead ner' a pipe. Ye'll ettah leave me a bit extra i' yer will after this.

Joe: Aw, heng t'will, Ah'm noan bahn to dee yet.

Dozee (getting his pouch back and feeling at it): Nou, ye'll noan dee if borrad bacca 'll keep ye wick. Bud Ah've a lowse tooith here, ye'll ettah pool it aht fer nowt to pay fer fillin' that cadge pipe.

Tom: That 'ud be a poor bargain. If Joe does owt fer nowt, they knaw abaht it 'at gets it. (Joe glares at Tom but says nthing.)

Sam: Hez'nt ta' a bit of a tale o' no soart, Dozee? Reyt fresh aht o' t'mint?

Dozee (studies a few seconds, then laughs): Aw, hev'nt Ah? We've hed a rare gamm' at t'wareus this last week er two. Ye knaw ahr two maisters, Sam an' Tom, an' what tempers they hev? Ah do'nt knaw which is t'war, bud if owt Tom's t'shorter tempered o' t'two. Well, ye knaw, it's been varry coud lattly, an' one vary coud day Maister Sam comm' intut' ware'us. When he'd gotten to t' top o' t'steps he stamped his fit, then he lewkd rahnd, an' said to Dick Petty t'foreman, "Ah wonder ye do'nt hing some empty sheets across t'top o' t'steps an' stop this draft." "All reyt," sez Dick, an' him an' one o' t'prentice lads sooin rigged up a rope an threw two er three empty sheets ower it. "Nah that's better," said Sam, "it's no use yeh starvin' i' t'oil." Neht monny days at after Mr. Tom com intut'oil, an' he'd to get past t'curtain afore he cud see intu t'shop. This didn't seem to suit him, fer he said, "Who's put these up?" "I did," said Dick. "Tha can tack 'em dahn then," said Tom, a bit sharp like. "All reyt," said Dick, "but it wor Mr. Sam 'at telled us to

put 'em up." "Tack 'em dahn Ah tell the'. I'm t'maister here," said Tom, a bit sharper still. "All reyt," sez Dick, an' dahn they comm'. T'next time Sam comm', when he gat to t'top o' t'steps, he lewked rahnd, then said to Dick, "Ah thowt Ah'd telled thee to put some sheets up here?" "Well," said Dick, "Ah put 'em up, but when Mr. Tom wor here t'other day, he telled us to tack 'em dahn." "Did he?" said Sam, "well, tha can tell him fro me 'at Ah telled the' to put 'em up agean, Ah'll let thee knaw 'at I'm flrst fiddle here." All reyt," sez Dick. "It does'nt matter to me, Ah'll dew as onny-body wants." An' theer an' then he set to an' put 'em up agean. Well, of course this wor just pie fer t'soarters, an' when Sam hed goan, they just roared wi laughin'. "Ah say, Dick," said one on 'em, "Tha's gotten a reglar job at last." "It seems so," said Dick, wonderin' what 'ud happen when Mr. Tom comm' agean. At t'back end o' t'week, sewer eniff, up comm' Mr. Tom, an' as sooin as he'd gotten clear o' t'sheets he shahted, "Dick, Dick, come here. Did'nt I tell thee to tack them sheets dahn?" "Aw aye," said Dick, "ye did, an' Ah tewk 'em dahn, bud when Mr. Sam comm', he wor vary cross an' telled me to put 'em up agean." "Did tha tell him what I said?" said Mr. Tom. "Aye," said Dick, "bud he said it didn't matter, as he wor t'first fiddle here." This staggered Mr. Tom fer a minit, Bud when he gat his breath he said, "An' he telled the' to put 'em up agean, did he? T'first fiddle, is he? T'first fiddle? Well, well, happen he is, an' if he is, tell him, if he ses owt agean, 'at if he's t'first fiddle, I'm t'conductor, an' he'll ettah play what tune I like."

Sam: An' what 'll they dew nah?

Dozee: Nay, that's what we're all on t'lewk aht for. We sal watch Ah'll tell yeh, hah t'first fiddle an' t'conductor goes on.

Sam: Dick Petty hed t'warst on't, but Dick knaws 'em, he'll noan loise bi t'job.

(Joe having put his hat down on the floor, Dozee proceeds to fill it with rubbish from the cobbler's stall. The others, except Joe, are watching, and chuckle, and wink at each other. Soon Joe takes up his hat without looking, feels it heavy, and drops it, and turns to the others as he picks it up again.)

Joe: Who the divul's done this? It's thee, Dozee, tha'rt allus mellin' wi' summat tha's nowt to dew wi'.

Dozee: Ah knew ye'd blame me. It's t'owd tale, ye allus blame yer best friends; an' me tryin' to get as thick wi' ye as ivver Ah can, so as ye'll leave me t'biggest share. Hah is it, ye do'nt blame Tom er Sam? I'm a saint compared wi' awther o' them.

Tom: Tha suddent spoil Joe's best hat, they cost brass, does sich as them.

Dozee: Aye, when ye buy 'em, bud that 'll ha been left him. It's a generation er two owd. Ah sud think it's been i' t'feshun monny a time; it's just abaht in nah, if t'nap hed'nt worn off so mich.

Sam: Ah'm capt wi' thee Dozee, an' sich a swell thisen, tryin' to spoil other fowk's cloas. (Sam winks at Dozee, while Joe empties his hat and puts it on.)

Dozee: Ye mud as weel ha' kept t'owd rubbish in, as fill it wi' tother rubbish, fer Ah sud think ther nivver wor sich a jorum under one hat afore. Nah, Ah'm a bit of a bump reader, an' if ye'll tack t'hat off agean, Ah'll tell yeh wheer yeh stand. (Joe glares at Dozee, but keeps his hat on.) Aw, all reyt, Ah can see threw it. Ther's one gurt bump 'at's made up o' all t'soarts o' dodges an' tricks fer savin' brass 'at ivver onny body heeard tell on. An ther's two hollo spots wheer human kindness an' generosity sud ha' been. Aw Joe, ye mun keep away fro t'Church, er they'll mack it hut for ye, they'll tell yeh of a shop wheer ye ca'nt keep yer brass long.

Tom: Nah, do yeh hear that Joe? Ye'd happen better let's hev' a pahnd er two nah wol ye've t'chonce.

Sam: That 'ud be what they call bullion, Ah expect.

Dozee: Ah'll tell yeh what Ah'm just thinkin'. If ivver t'lower regions hed to burn aht, an cooil dahn so as fowk could go, woddent it be a gowd mine? Talk abaht Australia an' California, they woddent be in it.

Sam: Aw, Ah thowt Tom an' thee hed made it aht 'at fowk woddent let t'miser tack it wi' him.

Dozee: Aye, bud ther 'll be a lot at 'll ha' slipt in wi' a poke-ful er two.

Joe: If tha'd mind thi awn bizness, Dozee, it 'ud suit me a lot better.

Dozee: Well nivver mind yer brass then, we'll drop it abaht it, bud Ah knaw ye'll be thinkin' abaht it all t'time whether we're talkin' abaht it er neht. Hev' ye browt a bit o' news.

Joe: Nou, Ah nivver seek it.

Dozee: Do'nt tell me that tale, Ah've seen ye prick yer ears like a donkey ower oft fer that. Ye must ha' seen monny a doo i' yahr time. Bud ye're t'same wi' tales as ye are wi' brass, ye tack all in bud ye'll let nowt aht. Ye're happen savin' 'em all up to tell Peter, when ye want to get in up aboon, bud it is'nt fair deos at all.

Tom: It'll be t'other shop 'at he's savin' 'em up for Dozee, an' if that's it, they ar'nt fit fer sich as us to hear.

Joe: What are ye allus hipin' at me for?

Tom: Becos ye wea'nt stump up an stand yer corner; ye knaw weel eniff yeh owd skinflint.

Joe: Well, Ah cost ye nowt, an' Ah help to warm t'oil, t'more ther' is, t'warmer it is fer t'others.

Dozee: Aw, be henced to that tale. Who the' divul does t'payin' thinks ta? Coils hes'nt started droppin' fro t'mooiin yet, an' cannels hes'nt started o' mackin' thersen, an' Sam here cah'nt sam his rent off t'road. Bud theer, ye are'nt worth talkin' tull. Keepin' t'oil warm? wah yer es cowd as a clot. By gum, it licks cock-feytin' that does. Ah'll tell owd Bletherskite that tale when be calls wi' his coil note an' see if he'll saddle it baht brass.

Sam: Ye've talked Jim asleep. (To Jim, who is fast asleep on the floor.) Here Jim, wockken up

theer, it's nobbut t'forend o' t'week. Hah's towd sehwa? Hes shoo pigged yet.

Jim: Aye, that's what macks me so sleepy. Ah wor up all yester-neet an' a bonny doo Ah hed, fer Ah knew shoo'd worry 'em all if Ah left 'em wi' her, an' shoo wor like a tiger if Ah went near. Lewk at this (shows his boot, with the heel partiy torn off). Shoo did that as Ah lept t'-pig-oil yard door to get aht of her gate.

Sam: Hah monny hez ta?

Jim: Aw, ther's ehleven, bud one on 'em's a greck.

Sam: If tha's just a bit of luck then nah, tha'll be a to-thre pahnd into pocket. Ah'm varry pleased. Tha's hed bad luck eniff afore. (Looks at the torn shoe.) But tha mud ha hed thi leg brockken if shoo'd getten reyht hod on the'.

Jim: As easy as owt, Ah'd to lewk slippy Ah can tell yeh.

Sam: Tack thi booit off, an' let's see what Ah can mack on't. (Jim hands his boot to Sam, who begins pottering about on his bench.)

Joe: Hez ta t'pigs to sell?

Jim: Aye, to somebody, bud Ah sah'nt sell ye 'em, neht one 'at turns 'em aht to fend fer thersen as ye dew. Ah do'nt call that pig keepin', Ah call it pig oinin.

Joe: Ah'll buy 'em if tha likes.

Jim: Ah do'nt like, then. Ah sud be varry sorry to hear 'at onny pigs 'at I ivver bred wor rangin' ower t'tahn, steylin swill fer a livin'.

Sam: Nah do'nt ye two get agate o'differin' abaht pigs. Ther a bit like religion an' politics is pigs, a soart o' red hut subject. (Turning to Hiram Coombs.) Nah, Hiram, what hez tha to say fer thisen? Ah do'nt think tha's spokken sin⁷ tha com' in.

Hiram: Aw, Ah've spokken to-thre times, bud ye wor all to threng to tack onny notice on meh.

Sam: Nah, then, chaps, fair doos. (Knocks on the bench with his hammer.) Hiram here's like new drink, he'll blaw t'cork aht if ye do'nt let him heh vent. Come on, nah, ther's silence.

Hiram: Nay, Ah nobbut said Ah'd spokken. Ah wor

nobbut wantin' to knaw if we wor bahn to hev a few pertates roasted? Ah'd nowt else to say.

Dozee: Gooid owd lad. Ah'd fergotten Ah wor hungry till tha mentioned pertates. Ha's t'stove. (Looks in stove.) Just reyt. Come on, who pays? It's yahr turn Joe, come on.

Joe: Ah want no pertates.

Dozee: Wait wol ther rosted, an' we'se see who's first hand in. Let's see, Tom's aht o'wark, he ca'nt pay; Sam finds t'fire; Hiram 'll fotch 'em, so wer's nobbut ye an' me, an' 'Ike Holmes, if he comes. What yeh say, Joe?

Joe: Ah say nowt. Ah want no taters Ah tell yeh.

Dozee: Here, tack this fourpence, Hiram, an' fetch four pund. If we'd to wait o' sich as Joe we sud all be pined to deeth.

Hiram: What abaht a drop o' ale?

Dozee: Aye, we sud hev an' odd swig, just to wesh 'em dahn at 't'finish. Six pennorth 'll dew, as Joe's teetotal.

Joe: Who is?

Dozee: Ah'll tack gooid care ye arc, if yeh weant pay. Hurry up, Hiram. I'll touch t'fire ready fer the' comin' back. (Exit Hiram. Dozee trims the fire, then takes the poker and marches about the room like a soldier.)

Sam: What-ivver hez ta agate nah? Tha owt to heh been a sowdger, er joind t'volunteers.

Tom: Aye, er a Bobby.

Sam: Nay, he'd tack to mich stuffin' fer a Bobby.

Dozee: Ah suddent be like owd Jonothan Parson then. Ye knaw him? He's a bit up i't'rig. It wor this way: A chap fro t'next parish an' him wor differin' one neet, an' they'd getten to rayther heigh works. Dont hed kept dingin' t'other chap up abaht one thing an' another, when t'other chap, a soart o' cherful like, said, "Well, ther's one thing i' yahr faver." "Aye, what's that?" said Dont. "Wah, ye'd mack a reyt full-brested sowdger, ye nobbut want one thing." "What's that?" said Dont. "Yer heead settin' on t'other way first." (Laughter.)

Sam: By t'land. Dont 'ud nivver stand that.

- Dozee: Bi all accounts he did'nt. Fer Dont's as strong as a bull, an' as stupid; an' he just intul t'other chap an gav him a reyt dahn gooid hidin'.
- Sam: If he did, it wor to bad, bud Ah know he's a bit sore o' that point. (Hiram is heard on the stairs.) Stop thi marchin' Dozee. Ther's Hiram comin'. (Enter Hiram, a bag in one hand, a pitcher in the other.)
- Hiram: Tack hod o'this pitcher, an' Ah'll slip an wesh t'pertates. (Dozee takes the pitcher and a small tot glass, which Hiram takes out of his pocket. Exit Hiram.)
- Dozee (holding up the pitcher.) Let's see, this wor to swill 'em dahn wi', bud Ah cud dew wi' a tot nah.
- Tom: Hah wod it be, if we hed hawf a swig just to wet wer whistles? Bud tha'll ettah be varry careful, er it we'ant run to another swig a-piece.
- Dozee: We'll risk it onny way. (He gives everyone except Joe a tot.) Hez Joe to hev a tot? He dozzent desarve it, an' he's teetotal, did'nt we mack aht?
- Tom: Cah'nt ta see his mahth's wotterin'?
- Dozee: Here goes then, bud bigow, he'll neht get off baht payin' another time. (Hands Joe a tot, who drinks it eagerly. Meantime Hiram has come in and put the potatoes in the stove, stopping to get his tot of ale.)
- Sam (to Hiram): Did'nt ta see owt o' Ike, nowheer abaht?
- Hiram: He'll be here afore owt's long. Ah left him talkin' to t'landlord's dowter at t'Cross Pipes.
- Dozee: Are they getin' a bit thick, them two?
- Sam: All t'lasses is thick wi' Ike. They cah'nt help thersen, he's so full o' life an fun.
- Dozee: Nay, Ah wor nobut thinkin' 'at if he stopped te long wi' her, he mud miss his share o' t'joinin' o' pertates an' ale.
- Hiram: Aw, he said he wor comin' sooin.
- Tom: Hah's t'pertates goin' on?
- Sam: Nay, Tom, hev a bit o' patience, they cah'nt rost i' no time.
- Tom: Ah did'nt want 'em to get burned, Ah'd rayther hev 'em raw ner black.

Sam: Time an' patience, Tom, works wonders, an' wi' a bit o' fire they'll rost pertates. Bud who's yon comin'? Ike an' nobody else. Ah do'n't knaw hah it is, bud he seems to bring all t'rattle an' beng o' t' smithy wi' him. Lasses all like him, wah ahr Betty's fair lapped up in him, an' shoo is'n't one 'at tacks to onnybody.

(Enter Ike, who casts a hasty glance round.)

Ike: Eh, chaps, Ah think Ah've seen t'funniest thing to-neet, Ah ivver saw i' all mi born days. Ye knaw that middin' at t'fold side? Well, Ah wor just comin' on t'fold, neht five minits sin', when Ah happened to lewk at it, an' Ah noticed 'at ther wor a terrible mcild an' tew ameng t'rubbish. T'pertate an' apple pillins seemed to be scufflin' an' feytin', then they started off one after another on t'Fold as if they wor wick, er some swirl o' wind hed hod on 'em, bud ther wor'nt a breeth. Ah wor fair capt as Ah stood an' watched t'carry on, Ah eud'nt mack it aht at all. Then Ah spied summat stickin' of o' t'corner o' Joe Robinson hahse-end, an' what do ye think it wor? Nowt bud a pig snaht wi' it's mahth wide oppen. An if ye'll believe me, all t'pillins and t'riff-raff off o' t'middin wor racin' like mad to get intah its chops. An' they went on wol ther wor'nt a scrap left. Bigow, Ah thowt to mi-sen, Tha must ha-been some an' hungahree, owd lass.

Joe (jumping up in a towering rage): Tha'rt a liar, Ike, tha'rt a liar, that's what tha' art.

Ike: Nay, heng it all. Ah did'nt say it wor yahr pig. (Appealing to the others). Nah did Ah?

Joe: Nou, but Ah knaw what tha means. (Exit Joe, in a rage.)

Ike: Ave, go, an' gooid shutness Ah'm sewer fer ivvery body. Hez he hed owt er paid owt?

Dozee: He's paid nowt, an' he's hed nowt—Well, just a thimmliful o'ale.

Ike: Reyt, who hez paid.

Sam: Dozee, as far as Ah knaw.

Ike: Hah mich?

Sam: Tenpence.

Ike: Here Dozee, tack this sixpence, it's nowt bud reyt 'at us single chaps sud stand t'racket fer a bit of a doo o' this sort. Ah'm nobbut just i' time, Ah see.

Dozee: Bigow lad, tha wokkened owd Joe wi' thi pig tale, he stood it a bit varry fair. Bud Ah saw him squirmin', a bit afore he brack aht.

Tom: Tak yer time. He'll happen be comin' back to pay his whack.

Ike: More likely to sup an' eyt his share. He hes'nt monny front teeth left, But he'd stand 'em all poolin' aht, like t'owd Jew we read abaht, afore he'd pay owt. Ah hope we've seen t'end on him, fer he grunts an' grahls, an' macks ivvery-body meadless like hissien.

Hiram (Pokes a potato out of the fire, sticks his penknife into it, then peels it): Ther ready chaps. (Gets them out with the poker, catches and dandles them in his hands and chucks them round, and they all try to get some satisfaction out of half-roasted potatoes. Exit Ike, returns with some salt.)

Ike: It is'nt livin' bi t'sweat o' yer brah, is'nt this, it's more like livin' bi t'skin o' yer fingers an' mahth. An' what ye get dahn's abaht awf pertate an awf cinder. Whew! is ther a sup o' drink left? fer Ah feel as if Ah'd swallowed a red hut cowk. (The jug is handed round and Ike has a tot.) Theer, that'll just sleek t'cowk. Nah then, lewk aht an' Ah'll shew yeh summat reyt brand new. (He jumps up, and in the middle of the floor dances a single step.)

Dozee: Wheer ivver did ta' pick that up?

Ike: Aw, it wor a chap fro Halifax, 'at Ah saw dewin' it, at Haworth Rush.

Dozee: (Getting up, and trying to imitate Ike): Hah does ta frame?

Sam: Here, Ah say chaps, Ah doant want to bawk yer fancy, bud Ah don't want owd Sparrerlaps, when he comes fer t'rent, to fiind t'under-drawin' laid o' t'hearth stone.

Ike: (to Dozee): Sam's reyt, bud if tha'll come to t'smithy, Ah'll let the inteh t'insect of hah it's done.

Dozee: All reyt.

Sam: Hezzent to a bit of a jute o' no sort Ike, 'at that can give us?

Ike: Nou, Ah think Ah'm abaht pump'd dry. Then Ah'm thinkin' it's time Ah started mi farewell tour.

Sam: Aw! hah's that? gooidish time is'ent it?

Ike: Nay, Ah don't know. It seems to tack some on 'em monny a year, an' t' bigger gun they are t'longer it tacks 'em. Of course its a bit of a wheeze, bud as long as t'public swallohs t'bait they'll ge ther chance.

Sam: All reyt, just to save time, suppose tha starts thi fareweel nah then, as its bahn to tack the' so long.

Ike: Au ye've heeard all my bits o' ditties ower an' ower agean.

Sam: Nivver thee heed, we'll tell the' when we're stalled.

Dozee: He's like all to'singers is Ike, he tacks a feaful lot o' pressin'. Nah come on Ike, tha'rt all 'at can dew a bit o' owt i' that line. Tha woddent get nich chance if we were all singers.

Ike: All reyt, what'll yeh hev' then?

Sam: Aw, let's heh "Bother 'em."

Ike: Nay, nay, ye must think Ah can sing nowt else.

Sam: Come on, lets hev'it. If tha duzzent tha dar'ent. An' it hez ta hev' a pick'd lot like us to see t' point. (Sam points to the door.) Just shut that door.

Ike: Aye, by gum 'er Batty 'll give us all a rannellin. (Ike takes a poker from the stove—) "Nah then, here goes." (He strikes the poker on the stove, sounds a few notes, then begins the song.)

SONG.

O bother 'em, bother 'em, bother 'em, bother 'em,
bother the lasses I say.

Eh this rib of owd Adam what bother it's made,
It 'ud tack mh a life like Muthuslah's Ahm flay'd,
Just to tell one i' t'million o' t'tricks 'at its played.

Eh bud Adam owd lad if tha'd kept thi sen whole
We mud all ha' been doncin i' Eden to neet.

But tha did'nt an' nah all fro t'tropics to t'pole

Men go singing like mad all threw t'darkness an'
t' leet.

O bother 'em, bother 'em, bother 'em, bother 'em,
bother the lasses I say.

O bother 'em, bother 'em, bother 'em, bother 'em,
bother the lasses I say.

Aye ther soft an' the're winning like angels wi wings
When ther' wantin to bring yeh to weddins an' things,
But once they've hobnobb'd yeh wi' parsons an'
rings

Yeh can whissel an' shaht, ye can bussel an' swear,
Fer t'first fiddle they'll play, be the tune what it may,
Ye may fob yer sen up just to keep i' gooid cheer,
Bud i' t' end ye'll all sing as I'm singing to-day.

O bother 'em, bother 'em, bother 'em, bother 'em,
bother the lasses I say.

O bother 'em, bother 'em, bother 'em, bother 'em,
bother the lasses I say.

Nah bud here let mh whisper wol neabdy's abaht,
Hah i' t' end if wer careful wi' mh be in at t' shaht
Bud we'se ettah bi certain to hev' 'em in' t'maht

When t' order to fly to t'new garden is sent,
Then if tothree on 'em comes hoppin along

We'll clip 'em ther wings an' so keep 'em weel tent
An' so ivver at t'after ther'll be no sich song,

As bother em' bother 'em, bother 'em, bother 'em,
bother the lasses to sing.

Sam: Well done Ike! tha nivver sang it better, bud
Ah hope Betty hezzent heeard the!

Dozee: Bravo! tip top! bud tha knaws hah to touch it.
Bigow, Ah think Ah's ettah leearn to sing.

Ike: Aw, tha wants to heear a reyt singer. Ah nivver
hear one misen bud Ah'm so aht o' consate 'at
Ah swear Ah'll nivver sing agean.

Sam: Just wokken Jim up agean, er he's bahn to miss
his share. (Dozee wakes Jim, who has got back
to his seat on the floor.)

Jim (waking flurried): What is there? (Looks round.)
Eh, bud Ah am suited 'at ye wokkened meh, Ah
'd getten to t'far end, Ah wor just fit to swelt.

Dozee: Wheer wor tah?

Jim: I' t'owd warks on t'moor. When Ah worked i't
pit Ah once gat lost i' some owd pairt, an' wan-

dered abaht fer 'ahrs afore Ah fan misen, an' nah, whenivver Ah dream Ah'm allus wanderin i' t'owd warks.

Ike: Let him hev a extra tot o' ale, that'll fill t'owd warks up as weel as owt I knaw. (Meanwhile they have been eating potatoes.)

Ike: Ye'll knaw Ted Myers 'at works at owd Tackem, an' Keepem's? Well, he's getten seck'd.

Dozee: Let's see he's a thin chap, is'nt he? they call him Trappins fer a nick-name.

Ike: It's t'same, bud Ah didn't knaw they call'd him Trappins.

Dozee: Aw, bud they dew, its rather funny, he gat it one neet. It wor this way: Him an' a fewh more sich like wor threapin' i' t' tabn gate, summat abaht a burrin', when Ted said summat abaht t' trappin's o' woe; ye knaw he talks varry fine at odd times. Then one of t' others said summat an' Ted trotted his "trappin's aht agean. Well, they all brast abt a'laughin'. an' they've called his Trappin's ivver sin.

Ike: T' same chap. Well, Owd Billy Goat, as they call t'maister at does t'tackin' in, hez a shockin' name as a tacker in; ye cahnt please him hah ivver ye try, an' as his weft an' warp's nivver first class, it's ten to one 'at t'pieces 'll hev a leg dahn some wheer. T' weyvers hez lattely fair dreheded facin' owd Billy. He is'nt one 'at sez so mich, bud he's sich a cuttin' way o' sayin' it, an' all t'time he's strokin' his beard like a saint. They say 'at he allus seems to mack 'em feel 'at they've been strivin' hah bad a piece they could weyve. Chaps 'at hez a bit o' spirit fair wriggle under his talk, like a worm 'at's been trodden on, an' they hev' to bite ther' tongues to keep fro givin' him as gooid es they get. An' they oft talk abaht it ameng thersen. Well, one day Trappins wor talkin' to Seth Thompson; Seth yeh knaw, is a buckstick, an' abaht t' best liverer-in 'at ivver tewk a piece in. They'd been sayin' what a teague owd Billy wor, an' tellin' one another bits o' bitter talk they'd hed to stand. "Bud bigow," said Seth, "Ah fair boiled up t'other day, an' Ah called him ivvery-

thing Ah cud think on, an' Ah dammed an' Ah sware 'at he wor t'biggest owd hypocrite 'at ivver walked o' two legs. Wi' his rotten owd warp an' weft, expectin' decent pieces." Nah Trappins, monny a time had hed all 'at ivver he cud dew to keep his tongue still when owd Billy wor lettin' him hev it thick ower his bad weyvin', so he said to his'sen "Aye, an' Ah'll let him hev it tew, t'next time he sez owt nasty to me." Well, at t'back end o' t'week his chance com,' his pieces wod'nt stand t'peark no-how, an' Billy just at it an' skinned him wi' cuttin' talk. Trappins bade it awhile, then he began a-letting' aht an' he called owd Billy to ill to rake t'fire wi', and' dammed an' sware same as Seth said he'd done. Bi all accounts Billy gaped like a throstle, an' dropped his low chaff fer a minit er two. Then he sammed hissen together an' lewked daggers at Trappins, as he said, "Ah think ther'll be brass eniff i' t'office to pay thee off, an' if there is'nt we'll stop t'miln." So ther wor nowt for it but Trappins hed to go fer his brass, an' he wor secked. Well, t'next day he saw Seth an' stopped him i' t'mill loin. "Did'nt tha tell me Seth," he said "'at tha dammed an' sware, an' called owd Billy Goat, all t'fahl names 'at ivver tha cud think on, when he grummed at thi piece? Well, Ah wor liverin' in misen yesterd'y after-noonin an' as he turned cross, Ah just did t'same, an' gav him it thick an' strong, an' he just secked me wheer Ah stood." "Bud tha didn't dew it to his face?" said Seth. "Of course Ah did, wheer else cud Ah dew it?" "Aw, Ah see what tha's gone an' done; tha's made a mistack," sez Seth, "Ah didn't start wol Ah wor comin' dahn t' dam-side."

Sam: Wah, Ah expect he'll get ta'en on agean if he is'nt te prahd to ax.

Dozee: Aye, like as neht. Lets see, Ah've nivver telled ye ower Maister Sam an' Solemn Nick, that wor a bit funny. T'back end o' last week Nick wor standin' starin' at summat er nowt when Maister Sam com' in. "What's to dewin Nick?" he

said. Ah wor just wonderin," said Nick. "Nah look here," Sam said reyt sharp, "Ah don't pay thee fer wondering."

Ike: Aw, he hed him theer, an' hah did Nick get aht on't?

Dozee: Aw, he mummled summat abaht "he wor wonderin' what to start on t'next." "Nah," ses maister Sam, "if ivver tha gets wonderin' agean, come to me, an' I'll sooin stop thi wonderin'."

Ike: Aye, an' ah'll bet he wod an' all, ther is'nt mich wonderin' time wheer Sam is.

Dozee: Now, but ther wor a chap 'at held him a gooid un one day. He's one o' t'day men, a Lancashire chap. Maister Sam axed him what it 'ad cost to size a warp? "Wah, let's see," said t'chap, "th'siziu' is theer, an' we'en you put th' warp in, you just squeeze all t'siziu' ewt agen, an' Johnnie Green 'll dew it Ah expect, an' if he worn't dewin that he'd be lakin, so Ah dun see 'at it'll cost ewt." Maister Sam laughed an' scratted his heead, bud he cuddent get ower that.

Tom: Here Sam just a minit, where dew I come in. Isn't it abaht my turn.

Sam: Nay, Ah wor lettin thee off Tom, as tha'rt so bad wi' t' rhumatic, bud tha can heb thi turn if tha wants it. What is it a donce a song er what?

Tom: Nou, it's a recitation. Its one Ah'm gettin up fer t' club dinner, an' Ah thowt Ah'd see if ye could stand it t' first.

Dozee: Aw Ah expect tha thinks 'at it we cahnt stand it its no use trying it o' t' club men.

Tom: Nay neht just that. Ah thowt Sam 'ud happen streyten it up a bit if he heeard it, if it worn't reyt.

Sam: Nah come frame on then, is it thi awn?

Tom: Aye, Ah've scrapled it aht wol Ah've been poorly.

Dozee: Ah say chaps, get yer ears oppen wi moant miss this.

Tom: Thee bi quiet Dozee. If tha can.

Sam: Come come fire away, it'll bi poor stuff if we cahnt stand it. Tha hez a name for it?

Tom: Aw its abaht t'Tahn Gate. Ah call it "Ahr Tahn Gate."

(Tom here brings from his pocket a rather dirty piece of paper and begins his recitation.)

Tom: "Ther's monny a one 'at's bigger, an' some atha say 'at's less

Bud fer bussel an' threng an' fer racket an' din
Its t'uptack of owt 'at Ah ivver heeard, is ahr
tahn gate.

Dozee: Is that all?

Tom (cross): Nou, it is'nt.

Sam: Nah, Dozee, if tha cahnt recite thi sen dont hinder them 'at can. Tha's heeard towld bird man say monny a time 'at ther t'warst sort et all 'at 'll nawther sing ther sen ner let t'others. Go on Tom tack no notice on him.

(Tom now goes through his recitation, Dozee interrupting with scornful looks and noises trying to throw Tom off; the others listen and look at each other as if they were somewhat puzzled to reckon the poet and his poetry up.)

Tom: Ther's monny a one 'at's bigger, an' ther's some atha say 'ats less,

Bud fer bussel an' threng an' fer racket an' din,
Its t'uptack of owt 'at Ah ivver heeard, is ahr
tahn gate.

What wi' owd uns an' young uns, at ther
threapins an' gamms

Abaht an' hahr afore bed time, its just Bedlam
let lowse.

Like t'heart o' some monster it throbs full o' life

(Tom stops and says "That's a stunnin bit eh?" then goes on reciting.)

Fro Norgate an' Westgate an' Braygate they've
come,

T' younguns to laik an' t'owduns to threap, an'
dont they go at it.

Ther's a lot arahnd t'Cross there happen weyin
up t'church.

Little Jerry 'at cobbles, an' keeps a fewh hens,
Is all fer rivin it dahn.

Bud long Tom 'at macks coffins an' tantles
abaht,

Weant hear a reng word agean t'parson an'
t'church.

An' so yeh can hear em, t'first one an' then
 tother,
 Liggin t'law dahn i' earnest. To hear 'em ye'd
 think
 T'job 'ud attah be sattled that neet.
 Bud ther mates standin rahnd dont seem to care,
 Whether Jerry, er Tom, is i' t'reyt,
 Wi' they're hands i' they're pockets, they snigger
 an' laugh,
 As t' two champions argie an' shaht,
 An' i' t'end, they're just where they wor when
 they started.
 Then t'Ranters 'll come an' tack up the'r pitch,
 An' hod a camp meetin. An' rare pluck they
 shew.
 They sing an' they pray, an' then one on 'em
 talks,
 An' just fer a while, he may get a hearin',
 Bud he moant go on long, an' he knaws it,
 An' so he goes straight to his point, an' then
 leaves it,
 Then up goes a hymn an' they march dahn to
 t'chapel.
 As t'neets comin' on fro one shop er another,
 John Barleycorn's heroes slink, er swegger
 threw t'crahd.
 Ther's somebody waitin yeh think, as yeh see
 'em,
 An' whoivver it is, er whereivver they go,
 Its pain, and neht pleasure they're bringin.
 Bud t'heybray an' t'hubbub's neht all made bi
 them.
 Just one nah an' then, i' his hig macks a blaze,
 As he curses his way across t'tahn,
 Wol he lasts, he reigns ameng t'din.
 Bud its t'barns wi' ther gamms 'at rule t'roost,
 What wi' clatterin fit ferivver at t'run,
 An' lips 'at to whisper hez nivver been knawn,
 Two score o' barns o' ahr mack an' shap,
 Can keep up a racket as long as yeh like.
 An' just fer to help t'pot to boil, all t'dogs i'
 t'Tahn,
 Seem to gether wi' t' fowk. An' thear barkin,
 an' yelpin,

An' feytin, they hev a rare doo wol it lasts.

Bud neet macks an' end of it all.

One after another t'men, t'barns, an' t' dogs,

Tack one ginnil er gate as they mack off fer
home.

An' t' silence 'at follohs is deep, aye far deeper
becos

Where it reigns, sich a hubbub hed reigned
afore.

Bud as quiet, an' as calm, an' as still as it is,

Nah 'at ther goan, Ah'm bun to say, 'at fer bussel

An' threng, 'an fer racket an' din, its t'uptack

Of owt 'at Ah ivver heeard, is ahr tahn gate.

Dozee: Well done Tom. Its taen the' some cudgelin
aht hez that. An' tha brings 'em all in, as
deftly as owt, t'men an' t'barns, an' t'dogs, all
t'jorum an' t'hullaballoo. An' i' poetry tew.
We'se ettah tack wer hats off to thee nah. Bud
tha'll ettah lewk a bit more like t'real thing.
T'barber 'll loise a customer that's t'warst on't,
he'll see the no more.

Tom: What de ye say Sam, Ah can mack nowt o' Dozee
talk.

Sam: Aw it 'll dew, Ah've heeard war. Bud duzzent ta
think, its a bit hey-flown fer club men.

Tom: That's what Ahm flay'd on, bud if ye've no more
fawt to finn'd wi 't ner that, they'l ettah stand
it.

Sam: Aye, but if tha'll tack my advice Tom, tha
weant dew it, wol lattish on i t'eemin, happen
ten er hauf past, when they've hed a glass er
two.

Tom: Aw aye, Ah see, reyt.

Betty (opens the door and looks in): D'ye knaw what
time it is?

Ike: It'll be goin' up t'hill to ten somewheer.

Betty: Tha knaws better ner that Ike. It'll strike
eleven no more wol to-morn at t' fornocin. Ah'm
capt at yeh. An' thee Tom, tha'll be on t'club
Ah expect; Ah don't knaw what 's t' matter wi'
the' bud Ah saw the' 'hotchin' abaht. Tha
moa'nt let t'sick steward catch the' rakin' aht at
this time o' t'neet, er beng goes t'club brass, an'
tha'll ettah frame off to t'wark agean.

Sam: Betty, Betty.

Betty: Ah'v noan done yet. Ah've heeard ye lot laughin' an' doncin' fer three solid hahrs, thinkin' ivvery minit ye'd be done. Owd Joe's goan long sin, Ah heeard him come mutterin dahn t'steps. Ah don't know what ye've done at him, bud he sware summat awful abaht Ike as he tewk t'door.

Ike: Nah Mrs. Sidebotham, we wor gettin' on varry nicely, an' we wor just abaht goin'.

Betty: Aw, sich as thee and Dozee can stop up es long as ye've a mind. Ye hev'n't a lot o' barns gettin' up hungehree ivvery mornin'. But ye Hiram, yeh owt to ha bin i'bed two ahrs sin at t' lattest. Ye'll ettah be up just after five to dew fair to yer horse. An' Jim (she wakes him up). Wah ye hev more sense ner onny o' t'others, sleepin' wol they're gabbin' an talkin, bud ye'd be better i' bed.

Tom: Nah Betty, we've hed a varry nice neet, an' we're varry mich obleeged to ye an' yahr maister fer hev'in' us to kal a bit; fowks want a bit o' breetinin' nah an' then, er they'd grow green mahld. Ah know ye'll noan tell on me to t'sick steward. An' to tell yeh t'trewth Ah've stopped a bit longer ner Ah sud ha done, so 'at he'd be i' bed when Ah passed their hahse.

Betty: All reyt Tom, Ah did get a bit cross once er twice when Ah heeard ye all laughin'. It's a bit maddenin' when yeh could dew wi' summat leet-some yersen, to hear other fowk gettin' it, wol ye sit mum an' mad just aht o' hearin' o' t'joke er whativver it is 'at's goin' on.

Ike: Reyt, ye're reyt. Sam'll ettah tell yeh t'tales, an' then ye can laugh yersen to sleep.

Betty: Aw be heng'd to yer second hand tales; Sam'll be snorin' like a pig afore he's been i' bed five minits.

Sam: Betty, Betty, if they ar'nt off sooin they'll know all my waik points. (Exit all except Sam and Betty.)

Betty: Nah then come thi ways, an' get yon tothre boil'd milk supp'd an' we'll be off to bed.

Curtain.



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